# Full Orders in Order at Fall Private Equity: A Tale of Mart. High Hopes for Series Money, Madness, Mayhem

his year's fall season series have come out of the studio lot gates with many expectations. After a summer of sluggish U.S. TV network ratings, an overabundance of copycat game shows and numerous reality flops,

the U.S. nets have been given another chance to wow the pants off U.S. and, indirectly, international viewers.

While the jury's still out on many fall shows (as some have yet to premiere), the studios are using MIPCOM to plan out their international strategies, a process that began with the L.A Screenings in May.

"At the Screenings we found that international buyers were looking for

(Continued on Page 42)

non-continuous storylines," said Marion Edwards, president, International Television at



"I used to turn on the TV to get away from reality.

ith half a trillion dollars in capital, private equity firms continue along their path to buy the world (the top 20 firms control companies with

more than four million employees), despite increasing concerns in the money markets. VideoAge took a look at what's happened so far, and wonders if Wall Street has any lessons to learn from Soggy Bottom USA.

Over the past several months, private equity firms have demonstrated a great deal of interest in the

media. The deals are often highly leveraged and, by implication, dependent on cheap loans. If an avalanche of U.S. mortgage defaults drives interest rates too high, the arithmetic underpinning these deals will start to unravel, and

(Continued on Page 22)

# **Champagne, Caviar for Rich East Europe Markets**

hen analyzing the Eastern European TV industry, it's difficult to uncover hard data. The industry is expanding, but information is not keeping up. Although transparency has not yet reached those shores, VideoAge was able to assemble an accurate account of some of the region's key markets: Russia, Poland and Serbia. The area's TV trade show, DISCOP is also reviewed. Full reports can be found on pages 58, 60, 62 and 64.

(Continued on Page 58)

## **TV Biz Frenzy Hits Latin Countries**

n a few months since VideoAge last scrutinized the Latin territory during its major TV trade show — the L.A. Screenings — the area seems to have embarked on a whirlwind of television business activities, with Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela at the forefront.

Two Brazil-based TV trade shows (one for content, the other for hardware) spotlighted the country's great potential, which is reflected by the restructuring of the international division of TV Globo, the country's major TV organization. Another TV trade show did the same thing for Argentina, only there, it's Claxson that's been restructured. This comprehensive report that unfolds on pages 48, 50, 52, 54 and 56, also takes a look at recent developments with TVes, the Venezuelan TV network that supplanted RCTV right in the middle of the L.A. Screenings.

(Continued on Page 48)

My 2 Cents: "Green" TV Generates No Interest, Greenbacks





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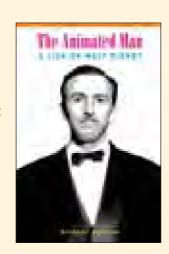
Fall full orders serve MIPCOM well

Caveat emptor: Take private equity money at your own risk and peril

Champagne and caviar await the TV industry in Eastern Europe. Review of Russia, Poland and Serbia

Frenetic TV business activities in Latin America pass muster. Argentina, Brazil and Venezuela are investigated

- World News: Italy, Denmark, U.S., Canada, Turkey. Plus, Letters to the Editor
- 12. Book Review: The guy on that funny cover is uncle Walt.
  Disney will not be pleased about this book



- 16. MIPCOM Preview: It's only a formality. The full report we'll never know
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# TOP CHEF

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## Carlo Sartori: **RAI's New Tsar**

t is officially known as the "RAI Worldwide Project," but the awkward title is a temporary one, created by officials at Rome-based RAI, Italy's state broadcast organization. According to RAI's Carlo Sartori, the "project" serves to better define the role and tasks of the newly consolidated RAI division under

which RAI will operate worldwide. This "new" division, called NewCo RAI International (and shortened to RAI NewCo), was originally created in 2003. but remained dormant until Sartori was appointed its president last August. Prior to this appointment, Sartori was president of RaiSat, a bouquet of RAI channels distributed via satellite on the SkyItalia platform.

Within NewCo, RAI International – the radio and TV channel for expatriated Italians outside Europe



Carlo Sartori with VideoAge's Dom Serafini

will have the most prominent role, as its flagship channel.

The plan or "project" envisions the integration within NewCo of several RAI divisions currently operating in the international sector — such as RaiTrade (content sales), New York-based Rai Corp. (services), Rai Cinema (film production and distribution), in addition to RAI International and other channels, such as RaiNews24 and events such as PrixItalia (the oldest TV festival in the world).

The RAI Worldwide concept is modeled after England's BBC Worldwide, and could include other RAI entities such as RaiSat, RaiClick and RaiNet (computer-based Internet

The most interesting part of the project (at least for North American audiences) is that it calls for monetizing all RAI broadcast channels currently broadcast in Europe (Rai1, Rai2, Rai3) through Eutelsat's Hot Bird satellites. These channels (with the exclusion of RAI International) are now available in Europe via satellite, cable and IPTV (Internet protocol for traditional TV set viewing).

The RAI Worldwide project also aims to make RAI International available in Europe (Italy included), and other RAI channels available outside Europe.

## **DR's Headquarters Spell Trouble**

midst an increase in foreign investments in the Danish media and the upcoming digitalization of airwayes, the Danish Broadcasting Corporation (known as DR) could be facing a crisis. But the source of the company's financial woes is neither foreign investments nor the planned 2009 digitalization, but rather the building of a flashy new headquarters and symphony hall, which is turning out to be more expensive than originally intended. Cost overruns and construction delays at the Oersted, Copenhagen-based facility accounted for more than 220 million euro (U.S.\$245 million) and resulted in 300 job cuts (representing 10 percent of the total payroll). Experts fear that DR is now ill-prepared for the competition that will inevitably come with digitalization.

Additionally, this financial nightmare will likely lead to programming cuts that will affect award-winning radio reportage programs, live concert transmissions, and even 2008 Olympics coverage.

When the plan to build the new headquarters (and the 1,600 seat symphonic hall) was first conceived in 1999 it enjoyed political backing. The idea of consolidating radio, television and online staff as well as the upgrade in technology was welcomed. The government was eager to convince highprofile companies to make Oersted their base. But things began to go awry in 2004, when DR first appealed to the government for loans to cover its exploding budget.

(Continued on Page 6)

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(Continued from Page 4)

## PROMAX Clinton-ized

ome 3,500 marketing, promotions and design executives crowded the Grand Ballroom of the Hilton Hotel in midtown Manhattan to hear a keynote speech delivered by former president Bill Clinton. It was the highlight of the whole 52nd annual Promax/BDA convention, but not an



auspicious one. Promax is the Los Angeles-based association of media marketing executives that now includes the Association of Electronic Interactive Marketers.

Clinton delivered a low-key speech in an undertone that was certainly not worth the \$150,000 price tag — in addition to the \$50,000 for his Secret

that the Service entourage association paid. The thunderous applause that welcomed the 42nd U.S. President clearly indicated that expectations were high, but the sparse applause sprinkled throughout the talk showed some disappointment. The speech sounded like it was recycled from another event and dressed up for the occasion with a "branding theme." Basically, the former president, a Democrat, blamed himself for not having better branded his universal health plan and other proposals that failed. "The Republicans were so much better at branding than us," he commented, giving as an example what the Republicans nicknamed his proposal to tax very large inheritances the "death tax." "With that tag, even the people who benefited the most -- and they were the overwhelming majority -- became afraid of the death tax!"

The former President also used the Promax platform to exculpate his candidate wife, Hillary, from the accusation now haunting her that she approved of the war in Iraq. According to the ex-President, his wife, a Senator from the State of New York, did indeed sign a resolution calling for diplomatic actions.

Lee Hunt, Promax vice chairman, assumed the interim managing director post for the mid-June conference in New York, replacing president Jim Chabin who departed the association for the second time. Since then, Jill Lindeman has taken over as permanent managing director. Lindeman stepped in as a consultant for the organization earlier this year to run both the MI6 and Promax/BDA conferences.

## Marenzi to Peddle Backdoor Pilots

ary Marenzi brought luck to venerable Hollywood studio MGM. It's for this reason that the studio's new owners — a group of private investors and Sony Pictures — called him in to head its international division. Actually, they called him back, since Marenzi served as president of MGM's international TV division from 1992 to 1997, prior to heading to Paramount's international TV division.

To Marenzi, who divides his time between his Lucca, Tuscany, residence and his home in Santa Monica, California, Italy is a trampoline to Europe. When he was at Paramount, he successfully opened a sales office in Rome and now, at MGM, he's planning to do the same. For now, however, he's fully utilizing MGM's London and Munich offices.

According to Marenzi, competition within the Italian TV market is increasing, thanks to growing TV networks such as La7 and Murdoch's Sky Italia. Plus, he added, "We found a



Gary Marenzi poses by MGM's many Oscars

(Continued on Page 8)





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(Continued from Page 6)

way to sell TV shows to smaller [Italian] TV stations."

From his office on the 14th floor of the new MGM building in the Century City part of Los Angeles, Marenzi went on to explain his strategy: The studio will start offering 15 MGM TV movies a year — some of which are "backdoor pilots," or MoWs that have the potential to become TV series — and five theatrical films from UA (of which Tom Cruise is a co-president), in

addition to four more titles from independent producers.

This is in addition to the titles that are currently available — new episodes of *Stargate* for the Sci-Fi channel (and for the international market) as well as a library of over 4,000 Hollywood classics.

## Ninemuse's PBS TV Debut

hen Montreal, Quebec-based singer-songwriter Chantal Chamandy took the stage at the foot of the Sphinx in Cairo on September 7, she became one of only a handful of artists who have been granted permission by the Egyptian government to use the site for a live performance.



Chantal Chamandy discussed plans with director Gérard Pullicino

Chamandy, who was born in Egypt but moved to Canada as a young child, "wanted to go somewhere to capture her roots." Her performance included members of Cirque du Soleil, the Cairo Opera House Ballet Company, the Cairo Symphony Orchestra, as well as

her own band.

The taped performance has been made into a TV special, and an upcoming DVD release, both directed by French director Gérard Pullicino, who has produced and directed shows for Celine Dion (to whom Chamandy is often compared), Madonna and Joe Cocker.

The performance, titled Chantal Chamandy, Beladi, A Night at the Pyramids has been distributed to all stations within the U.S.'s Public Broadcasting System (PBS), and will begin airing in March 2008. The Montreal-based Ninemuse Entertainment — Chamandy's label will talk international sales at MIPCOM, where some five company executives will hold court under the Horizon Québec umbrella and attempt to license TV and DVD rights to international broadcasters. Chamandy explained that while "music will always be [in Ninemuse's] background," the company -- up to now only a record label -- is leveraging the Chamandy special to branch out into all forms of entertainment.

## Turkey Film Fest Goes Eurasian

who's who of the globe's most promising film talent will be on hand to celebrate the silver screen at the 44th annual Antalya Golden Orange Film Festival, which will take place October 19-28, 2007. The event, jointly organized by the Foundation of Culture and Arts in Antalya (Antalya Kültür Sanat Vakfı, AKSAV) and the Foundation of Turkish Cinema and Audiovisual Culture (Türkiye Sinema ve Audiovisuel Kültür Vakfı, TÜRSAK), will also host the third edition of the International Eurasia Film Festival — which started out as the international section of Antalya but has fast become a major attraction for filmmakers from all over the world.

Considered the Golden Orange Film Fest's "international gateway to the world," the Eurasia event will open with Ang Lee's *Lust, Caution*, the latest film from the Oscar-winning director.

Prizes will be awarded by a jury of film critics from European and Asian countries. A new feature of this year's Eurasia festival will be a special jury prize from the Network for the Promotion of Asian Cinema (NETPAC).

This year, Antalya has created the Script Development Fund, a new resource with the goal of encouraging Turkish co-production initiatives. TURSAK (the festival's organizing committee) asked that co-producers (at least one of whom must be of Turkish origin) send in applications as well as screenplay treatments to the TURSAK Foundation in order to be considered. The top five projects will be chosen by an electoral body from the Antalya Festival,



## Letters to the Editor

### Regarding Ralph Baruch's Book...

In my opinion, your comments regarding the book were totally within your purview as publisher of VideoAge. You witnessed firsthand many of the events that Ralph wrote about and therefore have the right to comment on Ralph's perspective and how effectively, or accurately, He recalled those events and the perspective in which he viewed those events.

I was very moved by his recitation of past events. I know that, for me, Ralph put a lot of what happened into a fuller picture, and it represents an important document in the growth and history of the industry, the companies he was an important part of, [a testament to] his important role in so many factors of this business — worldwide. I thought your comments were yours to make and by and large I believe you gave Ralph's book a favorable review (which, I too, felt it deserved). Your getting into the issue of Ralph's advertising support of VideoAge, and you personally, I thought was misplaced. You have every right to make that point if you think publishing it is a prudent thing to do. However, within the context of reviewing Ralph's book — a perspective of a man's body of work and his significant contributions to our industry over his lifetime to date — in my view, is not the proper place to express your personal past issues. It would be [advantageous] for a newsman delivering the hard news to report it unbiased, and then, if he, or she wants, to give a personal "commentary"" — appropriately labeled — as his personal point of view. This way the reader, or the viewer, continues to trust the professional reporting of the newsperson, or the publisher, and separately gets to read, or hear, their personal point of view.

**Larry Gershman, Los Angeles** 

I just read your article on Ralph Baruch... It was excellent!!!

Seriously, you pulled no punches and were refreshingly honest and sincere.

Anthony D. Friscia, Los Angeles



and will be announced on October 10. The producers and scriptwriters of the chosen projects will then be invited to the festival to make presentations about their scripts and explain why their movie should win the \$20,000 pot.

Eurasia will also include an homage to recently passed directors Ingmar Bergman and Michelangelo Antonioni. The festival will honor the pair's impressive contributions to the film



canon by showcasing some of their most famous works.

## Redstone's Own Drama

umner Redstone's family dramas could easily inspire one of his company's films. After a much-publicized feud with son Brent Redstone, the 84-year-old Viacom chief is exiling his daughter, Shari, whom many expected to take over the reins after Redstone retires.

Last year, Brent Redstone sued his father, claiming he was being excluded from the business in favor of his sister, Shari. Two years ago Shari Redstone was promoted to vice chairman of Viacom and CBS, where she appeared to be in line for the chief position.

Previously, Redstone soured on Tom Freston, one of MTV's founders, and ousted him as head of Viacom. This came as a surprise as Redstone was often quoted in the media saying he regarded Freston like a son.

For now it seems as though Phillipe Dauman — longtime Viacom board member, Freston replacement and Redstone's personal lawyer and estate trustee — is most likely to succeed his boss when that time comes. However, while the elder Redstone doesn't spend as much time in the office as he once did, it's clear from his actions that he has no plans to leave anytime soon, and his grip on the business is as strong as ever.







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# Book Review

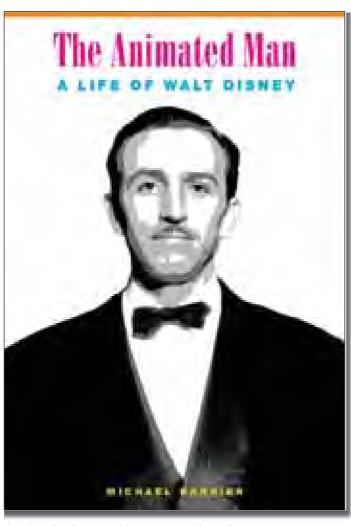
## Walt Disney Comes Alive In a New Book. But Is He Animated?

espite the dozen or so books written about him there have always been a lot of questions surrounding the personage of Walt Disney. Was he a misunderstood artist, a visionary entrepreneur, or both? Was he a fatherly figurehead to his Disney employees or a self-serving egomaniac? Was he cremated or cryogenically frozen when he died?

Michael Barrier sought to answer these queries and more about the man behind Mickey Mouse in the biographical The Animated Man: A Life of Walt Disney (2007, University of California Press, 393 pages, U.S., \$29.95). Barrier, an animation historian who founded and edited Funnyworld — the first serious publication dedicated to comics and cartoons — as well as the author of "Hollywood Cartoons: American Animation in Its Golden Age," delved deep into Disney's background to give readers a full-bodied understanding of how a Missouri farm boy with a paper route was transformed into the unlikely head of an empire. And while Barrier's work occasionally refers to Disney in less than glowing terms, The Walt Disney Company has — as it seems to always do with new books about its polarizing founder — opted to ignore the new tome.

In 1969, three years after Disney's death, Barrier, who had long been spellbound by a man he considered a "stunted but fascinating artist," began recording interviews with dozens of people who had worked with Disney throughout his storied career. Barrier combined these discussions with Disney's own recollections, as well as research from the Disney studio's archives to create a work with such attention to detail that it would have made the exacting Disney proud.

Even though the story of his humble beginnings has been retold many times, it is helpful here to briefly recount it. Born on December 5, 1901 in Chicago, Illinois, Disney always loved to draw. But his father, a perennially failed entrepreneur who had lost money on a number of ill-fated ventures, including a jelly company, tried to convince his child that doodling was a waste a time, and that only hard labor would win monetary rewards. A good son, Disney took in all that his dad spoon-fed him



A unique book cover with an amateurish quality

for a time, but soon the entrepreneurial spirit that led to his father's financial undoing took hold of him too.

After brief stints at a number of commercial art studios, Walt and his older brother Roy decided to go into business for themselves, making their very own films, then a mixture of liveaction and animation. Animated Man deftly documents the birth of this oncetiny operation, including the brothers' seemingly endless search for financing, as well as their occasional need to lay off huge numbers of employees in order to stay in the black. Roy was the consummate businessman, Walt the dreamer. While the duo faltered at first, losing money on pictures more often than not, Walt quickly established himself as a creative thinker who was uncommonly in touch with the common man. "'He had a very earthy sense of humor,' said Jack Cutting who joined the Disney staff in 1929. 'His humor was what I would call rural, or rustic... It was an unsophisticated sense of humor, and because he had that, he instinctively sensed what might go over well with the average audience," wrote Barrier.

That Disney had his finger on the pulse of America's tastes is undeniable even to his most outspoken detractors. From Mickey Mouse and Donald Duck to *Snow White and the Seven Dwarves* to *Mary Poppins*, Disney proved he knew exactly what would appeal to consumers' hearts in order to make them open their wallets.

When the studio was still small, Disney could easily exert his control over each picture, making decisions as seemingly insignificant as a change in a character's color or the addition of shading to a sketch. But as his business grew, Disney never could quite figure out how to remain as intrinsic a part of his films as he felt he needed to be. Production would be forced to halt on several films whenever Walt took a holiday or when he simply would not or could not keep up with the

sheer number of films being produced at his eponymous firm. Contrary to the avuncular "Uncle Walt" persona he'd cultivated as host of Disney's successful ABC *Disneyland* television show, he was downright dictatorial when it came to his studio. "If Disney would not make decisions and let stories move forward into animation, the people making his short cartoons would be left without work or would spend their time redoing what they had already done," wrote Barrier.

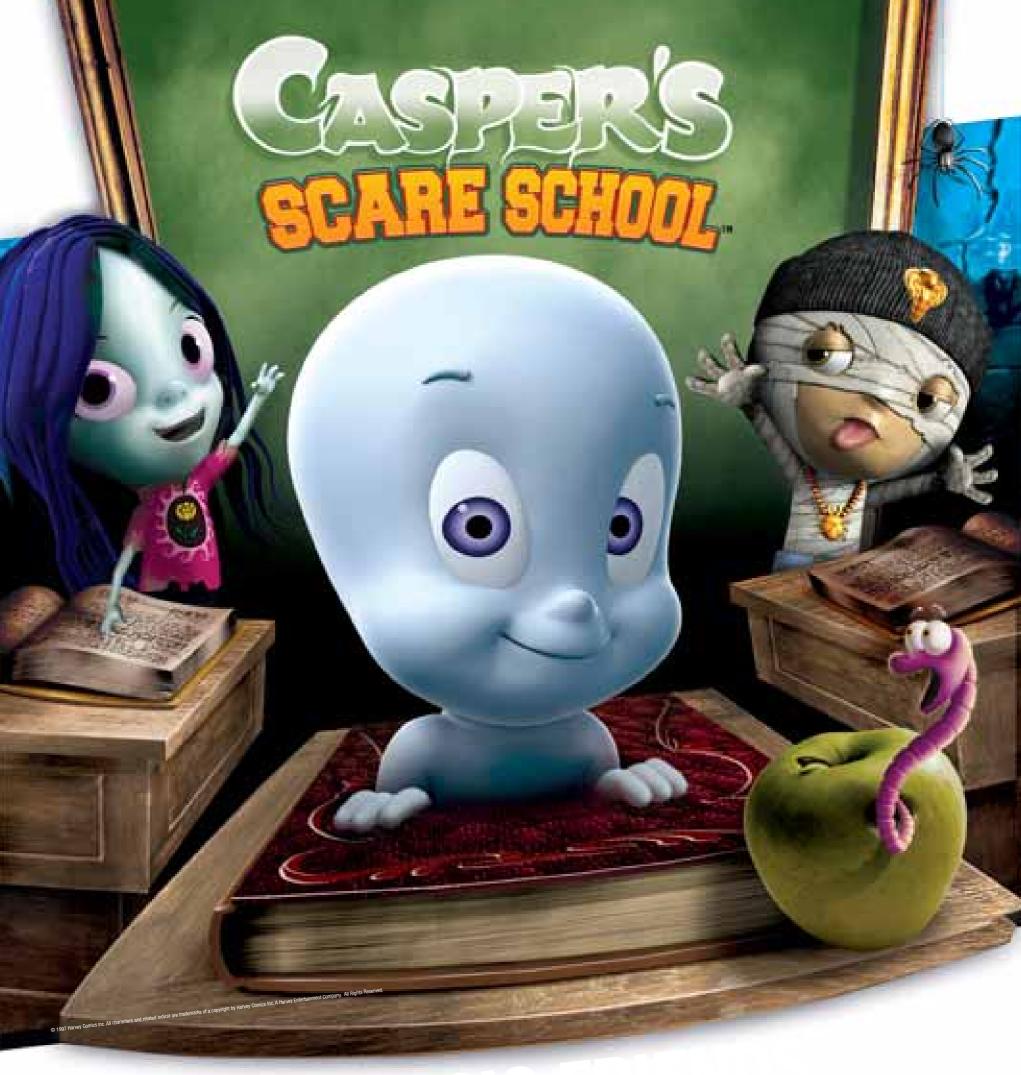
While Disney was indubitably a hands-on if at times overbearing boss, it was only because he absolutely adored what he did for a living. His compulsive attention to detail extended to his personal life, as well. He was a model train enthusiast who built full-size reproductions that actually worked in his own backyard. He also so loved miniatures that he wanted to take his collection of them out on tour.

But it wasn't until plans were under — way for the building of Disneyland that Disney truly found his new obsession. And when the park was finally complete, it really was his happiest place on earth. Barrier described Disney's fervor for the park as a "lover's fierce passion." Disney himself told an interviewer in 1964: "This place is my baby, and I would prostitute myself for it."

Yet while Disney's love of Disneyland was explained at length, it is that Barrier only briefly addressed widespread rumors of Disney's purported anti-Semitism — which he discounts just as quickly — that is the only serious flaw in an otherwise unparalleled memoir. While there's no way to know for sure where Disney's prejudices lay, surely Barrier could have delved deeper in the years he researched the man.

Walt Disney continued to make pictures up until the very end of his life — when the cigarettes he'd smoked for decades finally destroyed his lungs in 1966. But his name will not be soon forgotten. He left behind an empire that churns out a wide range of films and TV series each year, and encompasses Disney-ABC Television, as well as kid-aimed channels, general interest networks and a slew of theme parks that bear his name. In 2001, then-Disney CEO Michael Eisner said: "You ask what is the soul of the company and what is our direction?" Almost 40 years after his death, Eisner knew the answer was still Walt himself.

Walt Disney remains both the heart and soul of the company he built with nothing but ambition and the desire to make people smile. The Disney moniker, once just the last name of a Missouri-bred boy, has become so much more than he'd ever dreamed. It screams of money and power and a realm so vast that it seems impossible that anyone, anywhere has never heard the name. Walt Disney the determined businessman would've loved that. But his other self, Walt Disney the passionate artist, might've cringed at how far-reaching his company has become. Cringed and then counted his money, that is. Such was the duality of The Animated Man. LHR



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# MIPCOM Report

# Fall TV Market Offers Biz, Show, Power and Trends

t this MIPCOM, celebrity executives are taking the spotlight away from behind-the-scenes bigwigs. Some of the most internationally famous TV film and business personalities are making a cameo on the Croissette. This year's market, which takes place October 8-12 -- the day after two-day children's TV market Mipcom Jr. ends — will kick off with a keynote from Leslie Moonves, president and CEO of CBS Corporation. Moonves' session will be followed by six additional keynotes from industry leaders the world over, including Televisa's Emilio Azcarraga Jean; Zee Network and Essel Group's Subhash Chandra and NBC's Ben Silverman. But aside from the big names, it's business as usual on the French Riviera.

This year, MIPCOM will shine a spotlight on India — a test to evaluate the real potential of this large and populous country. In addition to Chandra's keynote, "India Day" (the first day of the market) will examine the growth of the country's film, TV and animation sectors, and look at areas in need of development. Ronnie Screwvala, founder and chairman of UTV Group will present a speech entitled "Indian Media – A Global Destination," which will explore emerging sectors. The whole day's activities, which are presented in partnership with the Federation of



Mathieu Bejot, managing director of



RDF Rights COO, Jane Millichip

Indian Chambers of Commerce and Industry, will close with an Opening Night Party with a distinctly Indian flavor.

While there's no doubt that the Internet makes screening film reels and promos from the comfort of one's own office much easier, it's the face-to-face time that makes MIPCOM invaluable. "For us, it's really important to meet with our international channel affiliates. But I also wouldn't underestimate the value of seeing what our compatriots are doing," said Michael Katz, vp, Programming and Production at AETN International, from New York. "It's all pretty collegial when it comes down to it." From his London office, Joel Denton, president of Production and Distribution at RHI Entertainment concurred. "If we're sending material over electronically, we're sending it to busy people and it's possible that it can get lost in the shuffle.

London-based RDF Rights COO Jane Millichip said, "Deals are not signed around the markets as much as they once were, but the markets are part of an ongoing process." This year, RDF Rights is focusing on its breadth of programming — expanding from the reality and documentary series for which it's known to kids, drama and entertainment programming. The company will attend Mipcom Jr. as well to mark the launch of its kids' division. "Because it's such an expensive business to be involved in, we staggered the launch, but now we're ready," she said.

MIPCOM will see the launch of Studio 100 Media — the Munich-based rights management subsidiary of vertically integrated Benelux media conglomerate Studio 100 — which opened in July 2007. The company will unveil flagship kids series (and BBC, YTV and Studio 100 co-pro) Big & Small at MIPCOM (and Mipcom Jr.). According to Patrick Elmendorff, MIPCOM is the perfect venue to introduce his company for international distribution, to acquire series for thirdparty distribution and invest in coproductions. The company's catalogue runs "from preschool to preteen," according to Elmendorff.

For Colombia-based telenovelero Caracol, MIPCOM's value is increased by the tendency of buyers to "drop by" the booth. According to Angelica Guerra, who will come to MIPCOM with the new title of international vice president of Caracol Television (taking over from Camilo Cano), since her company exhibits in a booth rather than a suite (as at NATPE), "we have a lot of people walk in and start deals." She added that exhibiting on the floor lends itself to strolling and observing fellow distributors' activities.

When it comes to what international colleagues will be doing, AETN's Katz had a few predictions. "We're going to see HD programming catch on more, as it already has in places like the U.K., Japan and other Asian territories. There's also going to be a focus on short-form programming," both that which complements long-form programming and stand-alone programs.

RHI's Denton added that his company has been pleased with a widespread appetite for drama. "There aren't too many big-scale dramas being produced by companies other than the studios. We appeal to an appetite for independent releases with our big-event movies, miniseries and action movies." RHI recently completed a plethora of action movie sales — 50 to Sky in the U.K., 40 to Telemunchen in Germany, 50 to M6 in France and 25 to Quatro in Spain. "We expected to see demand from pay-TV channels, and in the on-demand space, but our movies are also being programmed for late night on free-TV channels. A lot of the terrestrial channels



Studio 100 Media's general manager, Patrick Elmendorff

are picking up all rights," Denton said.

On the Latin side, the telenovela trends are all about formats. "We will continue to offer our telenovelas for local production," said Caracol's Guerra. She explained that despite formats' lower price tags, the trend is not hurting her company financially because, "We're being able to sell to countries — like Russia — that we weren't selling to before."

"Trends are very often the hyped-up tip of the iceberg of business conducted at MIPCOM," said Mathieu Bejot, managing director of TV France International. "Buyers are simply looking for good quality content across every single genre. With the dramatic increase of new delivery platforms, demand for content is high even though business models may still be unclear," he said.

"One of the biggest problems with MIPCOM is also it's greatest asset: its sheer scale," said RHI's Denton. "We get to meet with so many people, but we just don't have time to sit down with them and screen an entire episode. Every territory in the world is there and we need to meet with everyone," he said.

TVFI's Bejot provided some advice to Reed MIDEM. "Provide downloadable lists of participants with email addresses," he said. "This is the only way to prepare the market and make the most of limited time."

Caracol's Guerra had no gripes about a recent addition to the MIPCOM schedule — the preceding Telenovelas Screenings — which takes place during the weekend before the market. "We are very grateful to Reed MIDEM, because they have brought us results," she said.

Finally, while business models continue to change, one thing that always induces executive grumbling is the shortage of accommodations. With higher prices, and increasing demand for hotel rooms, many executives are choosing to take apartments. They are less expensive — though at times less convenient than hotels — and with the rising euro and falling dollar, there isn't much choice. **LCB** 

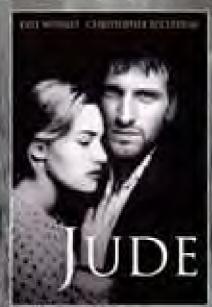
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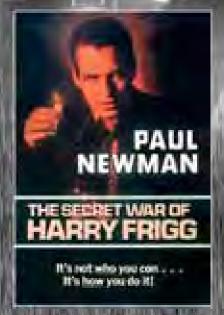
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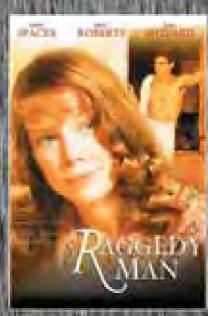


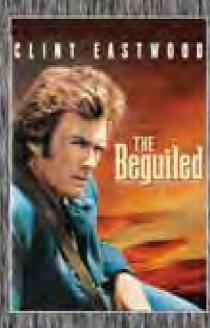






















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# Sportel

# X-treme Sports Give Monaco Market Punch

he success of the 18th annual SPORTELMonaco the international sports convention for television and new media executives, to be held in the principality of Monte Carlo, October was officially declared in late August, two months prior to its opening, when it had already surpassed expectations, selling out 95 percent of its exhibition space.

"We've had to put stands in the lobby area for the first time," said Bill Vitale, chairman of Vital Communications, the exclusive worldwide Sales and Marketing representative for SPORTEL.

The market, which will be held at Monaco's Grimaldi Forum three days after MIPCOM in Cannes, will once again feature the biggest names in sports programming distributors, including U.S. V.I.P.s: the National Football League, NASCAR, the National Basketball Association, Major League Baseball, ESPN and the PGA Tour, and European bigwigs such as Eurosport, the International Softball Federation and more.

"It's a very focused market, much like a MIPCOM Jr. or a MipDoc," said Matthew Ody, whose eponymous firm, Matthew Ody & Associates, handles the international distribution of Chuck Norris' World Combat League (WCL), a series that showcases mixed martial arts (MMA) combat. "You can achieve a lot in a short period of time and be effective without having to walk around searching for people like you do at bigger markets.



GRB's Marielle Zuccarelli



Alfred Haber's IFL Battleground

You can just do your job better."

Ody is certain that World Combat League, which airs in primetime on the Versus network in the U.S., will be met with much fanfare as buyers search for the next big thing in male-oriented programming. "Advertisers are finding that men can't watch organized sports like soccer or baseball all the time due to the sports' confined schedules," said Ody. "So what do you air when they're not on?"

This year, the answer is easy: fight shows. In addition to World Combat League, Alfred Haber Distribution will be on hand touting its International Fight League (IFL) slate. And the mother of all things MMA, Ultimate Fighting Championship (UFC), will also take a booth at the Grimaldi Forum.

The hot new trend this year is mixed martial arts," said SPORTEL's Vitale. "The numbers in the U.S. are staggering. MMA gets more viewers than the baseball playoffs!"

For UFC president Dana White, the reason why is simple. "It's the most exciting sport out there," he said. The company recently began expanding beyond the U.S., holding matches in the U.K. "It's already the biggest combat sport in the world," said White. "I want to be the first fight promoter who does global pay-per-view. I want the whole world to watch. And SPORTEL is the place to make that happen.'

Despite the seeming overabundance of series devoted to MMA, Ody feels there's a place for each of them especially considering that appetites for blood and gore vary greatly worldwide.

"UFC is doing well, but it has a certain style of violence not acceptable outside of the pay-TV and cable environments in certain regions," said Ody. "You need programming that's realistic, yet controllable, and World Combat League is just that."

Alfred Haber's Bob Kennedy noted that IFL's team-based match-ups (as opposed to the *UFC*s individual face-offs) present MMA at its best. "You get all the action of Brazilian jujitsu, but it's more advertiserfriendly and more palatable to the viewer in this form," he said.

UFC's White disagreed. "Would you rather see Rampage Jackson vs. Chuck Liddell," he asked, referring to two of the UFC's biggest fighters, "or, say, the Beavers vs. the Woodchucks?"

Just before the market Alfred Haber struck a deal with Asia's Star TV for IFL Battleground, and IFL Fight Night. Star, IFL's first television partner in Asia, will carry both series on its Star Sports platform, available in over 50 countries to a viewership of approximately 300

"We have more deals in the works," said Kennedy, citing negotiations with broadcasters in Scandinavia, Israel, Central Europe and Romania. He hopes to sign contracts with another 20 territories in the near future and feels SPORTEL is the place to do it.

"The market is so concentrated on male-oriented action programming that it's been very useful for us," said Kennedy, noting that he's already scheduled more than 50 meetings for what will amount to a relatively short stint in Monaco.

"SPORTEL has become a major annual appointment for us.'

The market has also become a critical one for World Wrestling Entertainment (WWE). "SPORTEL's been an integral part of our growth," said WWE's Andrew Whitaker, mentioning that the company's been coming to Monaco since it was a relatively small \$2 million business. "We're now over \$100 million, and that goes off the back of what we've done at SPORTEL.'

Whitaker isn't at all worried that the proliferation of MMA programming will impact the wrestling shows WWE produces. "My view is it's the ultimate compliment to us as pioneers in the category of action entertainment.'

Although it'll play a big part, SPORTEL won't be all MMA all the time. Monaco has also become an important yearly destination for Brazil's Globo TV, which will be bringing programming devoted to Brazilian football, as well as indoor volleyball and stock car racing.

"For those of us in sports media, SPORTEL is far better than MIPCOM," said Globo's Vinicius Pagin. "It's just so much more focused and allows us to deliver our product to our clients much more easily.

GRB Entertainment's Marielle Zuccarelli concurred. The California-based company recently struck a deal to represent Live Nation, a U.S. firm that possesses a large motor sports catalogue, which includes shows like Monster Jam and Supercross. "Live Nation is right behind NASCAR," said Zuccarelli. "That's how big they are in this arena." GRB recently sold Supercross to the U.K.'s Channel 5 and Italy's Fox Sports. While this will be GRB's very first trip to Monte Carlo, Zuccarelli is confident. "We don't generally talk to sports



UFC president Dana White

programmers but we'll be able to meet with the right buyers and expose Live Nation to the world."

Each and every company headed to Monaco is hoping for the same level of exposure. But whether it's motor sports or MMA that holds buyers' attention most at the market, SPORTEL's Vitale is enthusiastic. "I'm just looking forward to the buzz created when the Grimaldi Forum is full," he said. **LHR** 

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Studio 100 Media was founded in 2007 as a global services and rights company in the family entertainment business. Based in Munich, Germany, it is a 100% subsidiary of Studio 100 Belgium.



## IPTV Evolution

## Place-Shifting Adds To TV Networks' Woes

ime-shifting technology has taken the TV world by storm and IPTV has taken TV networks by surprise. Now, by marrying those two technologies some entrepreneurs are introducing a third element into the already problematic TV broadcasting equation: Place-shifting, the next big thing to capture consumers' interest. Though large conglomerates like Sony are entering this business, in the U.S., the one company leading the brigade is California-based Sling Media.

Sling's flagship product, the Slingbox, allows users full access to at-home TV programs anywhere in the world they happen to be (as long as there is a broadband connction), on an array of mobile devices.

Two of the company's founders, brothers Jason and Blake Krikorian, are San Francisco Giants fans, and in 2002 they found themselves frustrated with an inability to watch their favorite team's games while away on business. They couldn't comprehend why, with all the advancements in Internet technology, it was still impossible to access the programs they'd recorded on their home DVRs outside of the house. Flash forward three years, and a phenomenon was born.

For a TV station or network, the implication of place-shifting is that viewers are no longer bound to "appointment television," or even to a particular location. While this prospect could work well for some ethnic channels (by increasing audiences outside a given territory), for English and Spanish TV stations it could represent increased license fees, or even a change in the business model for international program distribution.

Depending on the model, Slingbox devices can be hooked up to cable, satellite connections or even DVRs. The devices take in a signal and redirect it to the viewer wherever he/she happens to be — on PCs, Macs or mobile phones (computers with AV outputs can transfer signals to TV sets as well). Because more high-end versions of the Slingbox are compatible with DVRs, customers traveling outside their home countries can align their viewing with local time. All they need is a broadband



The Sling Media family of place-shifting devices

Internet connection capable of 256 kbps or greater (though connections of 384 kbps or greater are recommended for better quality).

Thanks to consistent monitoring between the Internet connection and the Slingbox device, it is impossible for more than one user to access a single device at any given time. "Otherwise it's not fair to the content deliverers and it's not legal," said Rich Buchanan, Sling Media's vp of Marketing. While there's no way to control it, Buchanan said his company strongly discourages customers from sharing passwords because "anyone who logs on to your system has access to your entire living room entertainment system, and can buy pay-per-view movies," he said. Buchanan added monitoring also allows for an optimization of the video compression.

SlingStream is the technology within a Slingbox that adjusts video quality. It takes into account various factors, including network bandwidth, SlingPlayer device characteristics, video content, and the type of video input. Using patent pending algorithms, SlingStream automatically adjusts compression level, video bit rate, frame rate and other settings to create a quality video experience.

While this technology is attractive for business travelers and local news junkies, a wide range of companies across the U.S. have found new applications for it. In San Francisco, one local CBS affiliate plugs cameras into Slingbox devices all over town, eliminating the need for expensive satellite cameras and vans while doing traffic reports. Slingbox devices have also been hooked up to surveillance cameras in retail stores. U.S. cable provider Comcast has plugged thousands of Slingboxes into its head-

end to monitor channel transmission. HBO uses the device to monitor its Latin American feeds and check its signals.

Sling Media's newest technology, called Clip+Sling, became available to Slingbox users this fall. It allows them to isolate content from live or recorded TV shows and share it with others (even non-Slingbox owners). Clips can be sent via an email message or accessed from an interactive portal that's available to anyone. The new application appeals specifically to sports fans who can send their favorite clips of goals and shots to their friends. The U.S.'s National Hockey League (NHL) has entered into a deal with Sling Media by which the long-suffering league hopes to put an end to its ratings slump.

At the CES 2007 conference in Las Vegas, CBS president and CEO Leslie Moonves announced his company's partnership with Sling Media, celebrating the fact that CBS content will be "slung" by users. "The symbiotic relationship [between old and new media] will only tighten," Moonves acknowledged during a CES keynote address. "We're doing just about everything we can to see what's going to work now and in the future."

While some embrace the application, not everyone's a fan. Major League Baseball (MLB) has voiced opposition to the fact that Clip+Sling would make clips that are available for a fee on its website free to users of Slingbox. But MLB has opted against taking legal action, for fear of making the same mistake the music industry did — trying to get in the way of advancing technologies.

At the moment, the U.S. has the largest proliferation of Slingboxes. But they are also available outside the States.

The devices are marketed and sold directly through Sling Media in the U.K. and Canada, and through partnerships in Asia. They come in both NTSC versions and PAL versions.

There is a range of models out there, with different prices (though there's never a recurrent monthly fee). The Slingbox TUNER sells for \$129 and provides access to basic cable only. The mid-level unit, the Slingbox AV, is available for \$179 and is additionally compatible with DVRs, digital cable and satellite receivers. The Slingbox PRO, which retails at \$249, "is designed for the home theater enthusiast," according to Buchanan, and is compatible with up to three standard definition devices and one high-def video device.

When asked whether he expects other companies to create rivals, Buchanan was unabashed: "Absolutely. We have patent protection, but we welcome the competition," he said.

Sony, in particular, has its very own devices and propriety software, dubbed LocationFree. The products were available a year before Sling's, but were hobbled by high prices, a need for hardware, proprietary connections and difficult installations and setups. Back then (and until this year), LocationFree base devices were sold with LCD monitors. Like the Slingbox, they are compatible on desktop and notebook PCs, and Windows Mobile and Macs (in addition to PlayStation Portables). While Sling Media's devices have caught on more in the U.S., in Japan the opposite is true. "As a start-up, Sling Media spent a lot of money on promotion in the U.S., so they've become more well-known," explained Shigeo Saito, Sony's director for LocationFree marketing. Sony used to promote LocationFree as a home entertainment device, but is now marketing it as a networking device (the way Sling Media does), under the VAIO brand. The software now comes preinstalled in any new Sony VAIO computer. "LocationFree software is not only compatible with VAIO, but we're treating it almost as a VAIO accessory," Saito said. Base stations can register up to eight clients; a feature he said "is appreciated by the broadcast industry. We had discussions with the studios, and they understood and appreciated our proprietary software," he said. One major difference between the Slingbox and the LocationFree base station is the technology inside. "Base station technology is wireless, so you don't need an Ethernet cable to connect between the box and a cable or DSL connection.

Given the popularity of these technologies there's no doubt other companies will follow in their footsteps. Soon enough the idea of missing your favorite TV shows while on vacation will seem incomprehensible. **LCB** 

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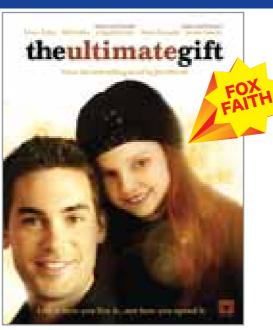




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# Private Equity

(Continued from Cover)

foreclosures could well extend beyond low-end American property.

These are genuine and serious concerns. In July, ratings agency Moody's woke up from its stupor and started warning that a deterioration in the debt market — that is funding much of this activity — was starting to make some of these deals look as dubious as the mortgage lending that prompted the problem. Moody's also cast doubt on the oft-made claim that — freed from the

short-term pressures of the stock market — private equity is good for businesses and the economy in general, as it allows for longer-term planning. Not everyone agrees with this idea, but Moody's claimed it could find no evidence of such farsightedness in the sector.

Not that these doubts have shown any signs of impacting the private equity bull market. Thompson Financial reports that Asian private equity deals in 2006 hit U.S.\$ 32.31 billion, triple the figure from 2005. The agency put the 2006 H1 figure for Australia at A\$12.31 billion, (U.S.\$10.71 billion), nearly reaching the 2006 full-year total of A\$14.62 billion (US\$ 12.72 billion). H1 2007 private equity deals in India have, at \$2.33 billion, already exceeded the full 2006 figure of \$2.27 billion, which was itself a record.

In the U.K., Carlyle Group made an

unsolicited offer of \$23 billion for Virgin Media, representing a 30 percent premium on the value placed on the company that was formed less than a year ago by the Virgin / NTL merger — a deal valued at £940 million (U.S.\$1.88 billion). The offer prompted Liberty's John Malone to hypothesize that Virgin Media might be prepared to take a pop. But many consider this to be no more than mischief-making by the usually media-shy tycoon.

But this activity has not been confined to British shores; it has emphatically been a worldwide phenomenon. Just this past August, Alliance Atlantis' international distribution business was officially sold to Goldman Sachs. In March, the Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR) and Permira-controlled Lavena took over of a voting majority in German commercial broadcaster ProSiebenSat1 (see page 28

Back in the States,
many of the
Hollywood majors
have been using
private equity funds
to hedge the risk
involved in some of
their most
expensive movies

for details). Permira and KKR were already partners in Dutch-based broadcasting group SBS, which itself controls 19 commercial channels, 20 pay channels and various radio and publishing interests, and their intention to merge the two operations was announced at the time of the ProSiebenSat1 acquisition. In July that merger was instigated following the acquisition of a 20 percent SBS stake from Dutch Telegraaf Media Groep in return for a minority-voting stake in ProSiebenSat1. The merger creates Europe's second largest commercial broadcast group.

Dutch media group VNU was purchased a few years ago by venture capitalists and renamed Nielsen. The publications division formerly known as VNU Business Media was renamed Nielsen Business Media and several assets were sold, including all of its European publications. Nielsen Media, however, retained all publishing titles in the U.S., as they were not part of this sale. Last December, Nielsen Media sold some VNU European publications to 3i, a venture capital fund in the U.K., and, in turn, a few of them were subsequently acquired by Reed.

There have been fewer private equity deals in Australian media than in the U.S. and Europe — partly because so many assets were already owned by a relatively small number of entities and partly because they were already highly valued. But still, much has been happening. Interest kicked off in April when Australia's government significantly relaxed its rules on media ownership prompting a spate of private equity backed bids, not all of them successful. Independent News and Media (INM) was thwarted in a bid for APN News and Media, despite upping its offer to a final figure of A\$3 billion (U.S.\$ 2.61 billion), excluding debt. Sir Anthony O'Reilly, INM's chief executive, might have been frustrated by the failure, but APN's shareholders were indubitably thrilled by the effect the attempt had on the value of their shares.

More fruitful was the association between private equity group CVC Asia Pacific and PBL, the company now run



(Continued on Page 40)
OCTOBER 2007



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## TV Dinners

# A Diary-tic Taste of the Food Network

ver wonder what it would be like to be seated among a shocked crowd at one of the Food Network's cooking shows when one of its flamboyantly superchefs pours zabaglione on a pot au feu? Well, VideoAge embarked on that quest. The good news: the visited set of Emeril Live was free of vile concoctions and the surf-themed menu turned out just fine.

Housed inside New York's funky Chelsea Market, a location that served as the National Biscuit Company (Nabisco) headquarters from 1898 to 1958, the Food Network H.Q. consists of office spaces, studios and a kitted-out test kitchen. Two studios (one surprisingly small, the other just a bit larger) serve as settings for shows such as Emeril Live, Iron Chef America, 30 Minute Meals, Quick Fix Meals, Guy's Big Bite and Tyler's Ultimate. Upon entering the building it immediately becomes clear that the locale, a food mecca where gourmet shops abound, is the perfect spot for a network devoted to culinary arts.

Before taking the elevator up to the Food Network floors, one's eyes (and ears) are immediately drawn to a seemingly out-of-place urban waterfall, where water pours from a large pipe to a below-ground pit. This, in addition to the entire first floor's brick walls, wood floors and exposed pipes serve to glorify the building's industrial past.

The same building houses non-Scripps-owned women's TV network Oxygen, and before you get offended by the assumption that women and cooking go hand-in-hand, take note that many of the Food Network's stars and viewers are men (and many of the macho variety).

The only show open to the public (and journalists) is Emeril Live, and even though it's lost a bit of its luster in recent years (the Food Network in the U.S. recently shifted the series from its primetime slot to the 7 p.m. spot), many still refer to the Food Network as the network that New Orleans-based chef Emeril Lagasse built.

Emeril's show airs in Canada, New Zealand, Mexico, Turkey, Greece, the Philippines and the Middle East, and



The Emeril Live studio is the bigger of two studios.

on U.S. military bases, embassies and onboard Navy ships via American Forces Network (AFN).

Since Emeril proclaimed his first "Bam!" the Food Network has turned a number of celebrity chefs — previously unknown outside a cluster of hip New York City restaurants — into household names and established brands. The biggest include Bobby Flay, Mario Batali, and even daytime TV superstar Rachael Ray. Scripps has also seen the popularity of glamorous Italian-American Food Network host Giada de Laurentiis (granddaughter of Italian film producer Dino de Laurentiis) grow both inside and outside the U.S.

Food Network programming can be seen in 149 territories across seven continents. This past summer, Scripps Networks teamed with Dubai, UAEbased Takhayal Entertainment for the roll-out of Fatafeat, the first 24-7, freeto-air food channel in the region. Fatafeat TV serves up Food Network programming in 21 Arabic-speaking territories, including Egypt, Iraq, Kuwait, Lebanon and Saudi Arabia.

When Tennessee-based Scripps Networks acquired controlling interest in the Food Network in 1997 from A.H. Belo it became its only channel that was not homegrown. Today, Scripps' portfolio also includes HGTV, DIY Network, and Fine Living, all of which are headquartered at the parent company's main branch in Knoxville, Tennessee; as well as Great American Country, based in Nashville, Tennessee. Food Network is the only one of

overseas lifestyle or food-related channels license shows from one or more of the Scripps Networks at once. Alvord happily recognized the fact that lifestyle shows have taken off internationally. When asked which of the Food Network series specifically are most popular, Alvord singled out barbecue shows. Additionally, Rachael

Scripps' babies calling New York home — logical given the fact that most of the

celebrity chefs on whom Food has built its success are based in the Big Apple. But the Food Network's reach extends way beyond New York. As of July 2007, the cable net was being beamed into 93.2 million Coverage Area Homes (up 3.6 million homes over the previous

year). It is now the 22nd largest cable net in the U.S., with a median viewer age of 49 during the day and 48 at night, and a 65-35 percent split in favor

According to Anna Alvord, director of International Development at Scripps,

of female viewers.

(Continued on Page 26)



The Food Network test kitchen



OUR AUDIENCE DOESN'T JUST WATCH WWE, THEY LIVE IT.



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### **TV Dinners**

(Continued from Page 24)

Ray's culinary shows have been celebrated overseas, and since Ray's daily talkfest airs on different, non-lifestyle channels, there seems to be plenty of room for Ray on international TV sets.

Program sales are not the only way Scripps makes money. The company is expanding its licensing initiatives domestically and internationally. Phiderika Foust, senior vice president, Business Development for Scripps



Emeril Lagasse, whom many credit with getting the Food Network on its feet.

Networks, explained that while some Nigella Lawson product is available abroad (thanks to her U.K. fame), most licensing campaigns are national in scope. But in the coming months, Food Network plans to bring its brands to a shop near you. "Emeril Lagasse, Rachael Ray and Paula Deen have developed efforts, and others have licensing efforts made up of one or two items," said Foust. "We are working with talent to create extensive licensing campaigns. The Food Network brand brings a multi-platform approach," she said. Until now the companies' licensing campaigns have been focused largely on online applications (such as VoD programs) and cookbooks.

The net's biggest licensing deal to date rolled out in September, and involved the introduction of 400 skews of product — spanning all categories of



Phiderika Foust, senior vice president, Business Development, Scripps Networks

housewares — into 932 Kohl's stores across the U.S. "Our first objective is to create a Food Network licensing program that is robust," said Foust. "And the second is to pair Food Network product with talent." Foust expects Ingrid Hoffmann — a Latin American celebrity who recently joined the Food Network team — to have what it takes to carry a licensing campaign. "We like to believe we started the trend of celebrity-'chefdom' and we want to be a part of that going forward," she said.

But if there's one thing that a tour of the Food Network shows, it's that it takes a lot of behind-the-scenes cooks to create one celebrity cook. Thanks to a team of sous-chefs and a crew whose main purpose is to rev up the audience, Emeril puts on quite a show, allowing the audience occasional nibbles of his food. Guests are seated and an hour and half (and a whole lot of commercial break pauses) later a meal is cooked and a show is in the bag. Unfortunately for this journalist, the food was scarce, and snacks were limited to gourmet potato chips. But at the very least the food smelled delicious, and the recipe for fish tacos has since been put into practice...with some very tasty results. LCB



The waterfall in the lobby of Food Network's New York City headquarters





# MIPCOM 2007



## **AMAZING GRACE**

DIRECTED BY: Michael Apted WRITTEN BY: Steven Knight CAST: Ioan Gruffudd, Romola Garai, Ciarin Hinds, Rufus Sewell, Youssou N'Dour with Michael Gambon and Albert Finney



### THE MISSING STAR (La stella che non c'è)

DIRECTED BY: Gianni Amelio WRITTEN BY: Gianni Amelio and Umberto Contarello CAST: Sergio Castellitto, Tai Ling



## **BOYNTON BEACH CLUB**

DIRECTED BY: Susan Seidelman WRITTEN BY: Susan Seidelman and Shelly Gitlow CAST: Joseph Bologna, Dyan Cannon, Len Cariou, Sally Kellerman, Michael Nouri, Brenda Vaccaro



## **200 CIGARETTES**

DIRECTED BY: Risa Bramon Garcia WRITTEN BY: Shana Larsen CAST: Ben Affleck, Casey Affleck, Courtney Love, Christina Ricci, Paul Rudd, Jay Mohr, Martha Plimpton, Kate Hudson, Janeane Garofalo, Dave Chappelle



## **SHORT STORY CINEMA**

GENRE: Short Film Series RUNNING TIME: 58x30 CAST: Brad Pitt, Tobey Maguire, Uma Thurman

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# Territory

# **German TV Biz Sees** Days of the Locusts

By DIETER BROCKMEYER

erman vice chancellor Franz Müntefering, a Social Democrat, recently labeled large investment companies "locusts," and since then, the moniker has stuck. The nickname stems from the fact that locusts descend upon a territory and leave everything destroyed. Similarly — at least according to critical left-wing Germans — investors buy into a company, squeeze every penny out of it and sell the useless shell.

These days, the "locusts" have come in the form of Lavena Holding 4, a conglomerate of U.K.-based Permira and U.S.-based Kohlberg Kravis Roberts (KKR), which acquired the majority ownership of German commercial TV group ProsiebenSat.1 Media AG, which subsequently bought -- from its own investors -- European Broadcasting conglomerate SBS Broadcasting. Private equity funds KKR and Permira purchased SBS only two years earlier before selling it to the ProSieben Group (for a hefty profit), forging a strong new European TV player.

The deal stirred up recent memories of ProSieben's former owner, the Kirch Group, which financed its expansion by going into a debt that later killed the entire venture. To finance the SBS purchase (costing approximately 3.3 billion euro), ProSieben — which was almost debt-free until recently — has relied on bank loans and now finds itself loaded with debt. Depending on the



Sat.1 building complex in Berlin

perspective, ProSieben is either extremely lucky or unlucky to have finalized the deal just in the nick of time, before the so-called "credit crunch" sent waves through the U.S. and the rest of the world, making loan financing a lot harder.

ProSieben CEO Guillaume de Posch's aim is an ambiguous one. On one hand, his goals are set on expansion — setting up a pan-European TV player out of two individual players (SBS and ProSieben) that will be able to compete with the still much larger RTL German group. On the other hand, de Posch has announced plans to increase his group's profit margins from 20 percent to some 25-to-30 percent, despite the high cost of investment. Growth is expected to take place particularly in Eastern Europe, where SBS is already quite strong and where the company has expanded into radio ventures.

But some analysts predict that problems might arise from merging the

ProSieben and SBS ventures. ProSieben's core business so far has been strictly TV - free TV, to be precise. Two small basic pay channels were launched only recently in an effort to become less dependent on classic advertising revenues. The company's main ventures are still the two large German general interest channels ProSieben and Sat.1, along with Kabel 1 a general entertainment channel generating about half the audience of each of the major channels. There is also N24, a news channel, and 9Live, which features interactive game shows. The entire group has brought in about double the revenue of SBS, which in 2006, for the first time, crossed the one billion euro benchmark.

SBS operates free-to-air TV and radio channels in Benelux, Scandinavia and Eastern Europe. After acquiring the Nordic Canal+ pay platforms, the company has also become a major pay-TV player in Scandinavia. In the Netherlands, the company also runs the two major printed TV guides.

Despite the skepticism running rampant in the industry, de Posch plans to quickly integrate the SBS ventures into his group. By this fall, the old SBS headquarters in Amsterdam may be shut down. De Posch expects synergies to come primarily from joint program acquisitions, where lower prices can be negotiated. SevenOne International, the division of ProSieben that sells productions and formats internationally, may profit from the larger group's activities as well. But analysts say the profits are not enough to bring down the group's mounting debt. So the channels will likely face increasing pressure to cut costs, at least according to one senior analyst at a large German bank (who said this shortly before the first severe job cuts at the Sat.1 network became public).



Guillaume de Posch, CEO of ProSieben

per the announcement, approximately 200 jobs will be lost, 40 of which are being attributed to administrative roles that will become redundant once ProSieben and SBS are forged together. Another 180 employees of Sat.1 will lose their jobs as a result of daily magazine formats being taken out of program schedules. Sat.1 managing director Mathias Alberti has vehemently denied that the changes in programming are results of the TV group's new owners. Nevertheless, the reaction from media regulators and the public in Germany has been harsh. Local Rheinland-Pfalz regulator LMK, which granted Sat.1 its license, launched a rather short-lived investigation into whether or not the channel still meets its licence terms since, in order to be eligible for analog cable distribution in Germany, channels have to prove that they cover all genres, including news and information.

Even though it was fleeting, the regulators' move illustrates just how sensitive the German authorities and public are when faced with so-called 'locusts." Other local media regulators are starting to investigate the influence investors have in the German media industry. They've already suggested implementing a limit to the number of shares investors can acquire in various industries, including the media. It remains to be seen whether this will pan out. Bernhard Heitzer, president of the German antitrust watchdog Bundeskartellamt, has already voiced opposition to the idea.

In the meantime, analysts are eagerly anticipating Permira and KKR's next step. ProSieben has said that in order to reduce debt, the companies may consider selling production company ProsienbenSat.1 Produktion, which has 1,000 employees. Permira is also the owner of the England-based production conglomerate All3Media that only this May acquired the major German independent production house MME. If all this is merged into one big group, another major pan-European player would be formed. For now, it's all mostly speculation. And while the idea has charmed some Wall Street-types, for German critics, politicians and regulators alike, it might be a whole different story.



The ProSieben Group's headquarters in Munich

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# Company Profile

## **Peace Arch Remains Free** Of Canadian Consolidation

By LEIGH STUART

o an outsider, it would appear as though the Great White North's entertainment industry is controlled by just a handful of large players. Canada's CanWest Global (with Goldman Sachs) has acquired Alliance Atlantis's operations, Bell Globemedia completed its takeover of CHUM's cable nets and some of its terrestrial channels, and Rogers has swooped in to manage the remaining CHUM assets. But Toronto's Peace Arch Entertainment has remained a true indie in this sea of consolidation.

John Flock, president of Peace Arch, said that with the exception of Lionsgate, his company is the only publicly traded, vertically integrated independent TV and film company in North America. "As we build our brand, being independent is an important part of our identity, and we expect to remain that way for the foreseeable future," he said.

Peace Arch was incorporated in 1981 as Medco Productions, a video production house. In 1985, the company went public on the Vancouver Stock Exchange and changed its name to Vidatron Entertainment Group. In addition to a new moniker, the organization expanded its operations from home entertainment into film and television productions.

By 1998, the company was trading on the Toronto Stock Exchange and a year later, the current name of Peace Arch was established.

After the millennium, things started to change at the Canadian production company. In January 2003, Gary Howsam's CPC Communications acquired a controlling interest in the company and moved the head office from the mountains of Vancouver to the skyscrapers of Toronto, CPC's home. But the prodco retained an office on the West Coast, and opened further operating divisions south of the border, in New York and Los Angeles in May 2004, when John Flock joined the

By 2005, Peace Arch expanded its focus from producing film and television product to becoming an



John Flock, president of

international distributor via three corporate acquisitions: Canadian DVD distributor Kaboom Entertainment, U.S. theatrical distributor Castle Hill Productions, and most recently, Los Angeles' Trinity Home Entertainment, which, by adding its titles to Peace Arch's catalogue, gave the company a direct DVD distribution operation in the States. Former CHUM vp and general manager Kevin Byles and his colleague Victor Rodriguez recently joined Peace Arch to ramp up international sales.

This summer, Peace Arch traveled to the big screen, entering the limited theatrical release business. "We see an opportunity for companies like ours to generate revenues from limited releases while creating greater awareness to help drive DVD and television revenues, both domestically and abroad," Flock

The first limited Canadian release out of the Peace Arch gate was the Steve Buscemi and Sienna Miller vehicle, Interview (distributed by Sony Classics in the States). Chapter 27, the muchhyped movie that focuses on John Lennon's death and stars Lindsay Lohan and Jared Leto, is next on deck for worldwide distribution (minus the U.K., where it's represented by Momentum Pictures). Another feature, Winged Creatures (featuring Dakota Fanning and Kate Beckinsale) will follow in limited release, along with

William H. Macy's next film, The Deal. Flock said his company is open to a wide array of genres. But, he added, "some topics, like women-in-jeopardy or gore-driven horror films, have been played out and are no longer interesting in the marketplace... at least until something clever comes along.'

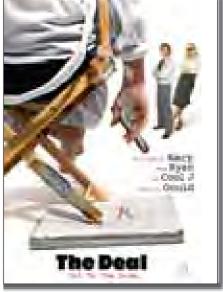
Peach Arch isn't resting on its laurels for the smaller screen. Historical miniseries The Tudors will debut on co-pro partner CBC this fall, after launching earlier this year on U.S. production partner, Showtime. "We expect to continue building on its success to compete more aggressively in the highend TV market," Flock said. The company will take the miniseries into the DVD format in Canada this December.

The business of bringing titles to the home entertainment market has changed in the past few years given the onslaught of both video-on-demand and smaller, more portable screens. Flock thinks that while the DVD business' growth has slowed, it still has a lot of life left in it. "We will focus on strengthening our retail relationships... and producing or acquiring desirable content that has a reasonably predictable financial baseline but the potential for breakout success," he said.

Meanwhile, Flock has begun to see incremental revenues from cable and satellite VoD on many of Peace Arch's titles, and the company is exploring



Peace Arch's Kevin Byles migrated to the company from CHUM.



Upcoming theatrical release, The Deal

ways of monetizing broadband opportunities. Aggressive content aggregation is key for an independent company to control its own destiny in a new-screens market, especially in Canada. But Canadian indies are facing even more challenges than new rights management issues.

With the weakening U.S. dollar and the expansion of tax credit programs in many states, some of Peace Arch's prodco competitors that rely on thirdparty productions are starting to feel the pinch, and it's potentially putting these indies at risk. Flock pointed out that Peace Arch has avoided such potential pitfalls by being a vertically integrated company — directly managing all of the business elements and mitigating risks. "Our strategy has been to create a fully integrated production, financing, distribution and international sales company so we are not dependent on outside productions," he said.

Another big change facing Canadian indies is the consolidation of production companies, but Flock has chosen to approach this with a glasshalf-full mentality, particularly when it comes to his distribution business. He thinks it could mean some short-term turmoil for companies without a Canadian base. "This creates opportunities for companies like ours who understand the landscape, know the players, and have long-term relationships," Flock said.

He expects business in Canada to grow, and is not dismissing the possibility of branching into areas outside of North America. "I wouldn't rule it out, but our near term focus is to expand our direct distribution operations, continue to produce and acquire top quality film and TV content... and to keep building one of the best international sales and licensing teams in the business," he said.



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# Programming

# "G" Content, Co-Viewing Make TV Comeback

By Valerie Milano

here's a new buzzword in U.S. TV programming schedules: families. In sharp contrast to the rapid evolution occurring with digital distribution platforms, children's programmers are taking a page from an earlier era of television and resurrecting the notion of family viewing.

"It's kind of interesting because it goes against some of the reasons why television has splintered into so many channels," observed Alan Gregg, Alliance Atlantis' vp of Children's Television. "The shift in the last 10 years was toward narrowcasting. But now the likes of YTV and Teletoon in Canada, Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network in the U.S. — which traditionally were at pains to put on programming that would turn adults away — are all talking about it. It's basically going back to the traditional Sunday night-type viewing because the co-viewing audiences are really an important demographic.

"Co-viewing is going to define the kind of content being produced over the next little while. We will see a rise in live-action family programming and, maybe not a fall in animation, but perhaps a change in style," Gregg said.

Over the past year, Disney Channel has reaped co-viewing benefits, attracting large adult audiences for both High School Musical movies and the second Cheetah Girls movie.

"Our movies tend to have a broader entry point," explained Scott Garner, svp of Programming for Disney Channel. While movies have always been a staple of the net's programming, Garner said the cable giant has adopted a less-is-more strategy.

"Over the past couple of years, we have cut back the number of original movies we do and keep the premieres event-based. That's what makes it special. Kids look at these movie premieres like the breaking of a big box office movie. You can't go to the well too often; overkill would undermine our strategy," Garner said.

Whether prompted by Disney's success or simply zeitgeist, there's an

increased interest among kid content providers in specials and one-offs projects that also happen to appeal to parents and older siblings.

"Reruns are not enough anymore and neither is just doing series," said Michael Ouweleen, Cartoon Network svp of Creative Direction and Development. "Kids want movies. You need special events."

Discovery Channel general manager Marjorie Kaplan concurred. "It used to be that Saturday morning television [series] were the be-all and end-all for kids. It's not that way anymore."

All the executives concurred that specials and one-offs are simply pieces in the growing puzzle of kids' entertainment that includes mobile, iTunes, video-on-demand, DVD and broadband. Kaplan said: "Everything needs to be thought about as crossplatform" for promotion as well as distribution. She pointed out that employing a multiplatform strategy levels the playing field. "We're in 45 million U.S. homes, but that doesn't necessarily make us a smaller competitor, because we can reach people on other platforms," concluded Kaplan.

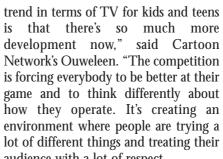
Such increased competition has translated into yet another new fad: increased production. "The overall audience with a lot of respect.

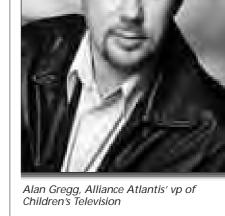
"The competition has also made everyone realize that this audience has critical faculties. They choose. Just because you put something in front of them does not mean they're going to watch it," Ouweleen said.

Co-viewing awareness plus the increasing sophistication of younger demos have resulted in programming that takes a slightly harder edge, addressing topics that can be used as fodder for conversation between family

"We can deal with issues like drug addiction, teenage pregnancy, samegender sex," said Tommy Lynch, who produces South of Nowhere for the N. "[These are] things that go on in the teen space that we take right out of every high school in the country. Those are not the kind of stories that we would tell to the six-to-12 demo."

Lynch added that social culture and technology conspire to age kids quicker,





meaning teen tastes in programming have changed over the last decade.

"The teen world today is much more complex," he observed. "You talk about age compression: Their world moves at the speed of light. They have information delivered to them in so many ways. Also, when television started, the nuclear family was the basis of all programming. The nuclear family of that era does not exist anymore.

'You have shows for teens, you have shows for kids, and you have shows for adults, but when you hit a chord, people go to it. I bet a lot of teen girls watch Grey's Anatomy. Kids today are watching The Colbert Report and The Daily Show like our parents watched Walter Cronkite," Lynch said.

According to him, the importance of snaring older teen viewers goes directly to networks' bottom lines. "That demo has always been the first to buy new technology and new stuff that people want to sell, so advertisers desire them. And teens also have a cultural impact. MTV was built as a teen network 25 years ago," said Lynch.

Marvista CEO Fernando Szew, whose company produces The N's teen series Beyond the Break, said years of catering to tweens left a void for older teens that is only now being filled. "I'm not sure that the older teens were forgotten; it's just a natural segmentation of what used to be the teenage marketplace," Szew explained. "Clearly the world has gotten much more sophisticated — more complex — and you do realize there is a segment of the marketplace that was kind of being underserved and left behind."

The push to reach older teens isn't just a U.S. trend. "This has been an international phenomenon," Szew observed. But, he added, "Although every marketplace is different, we cannot forget that we in Hollywood are creating television in the U.S. that influences culture around the globe."



Tommy Lynch, who produces South of Nowhere for the N





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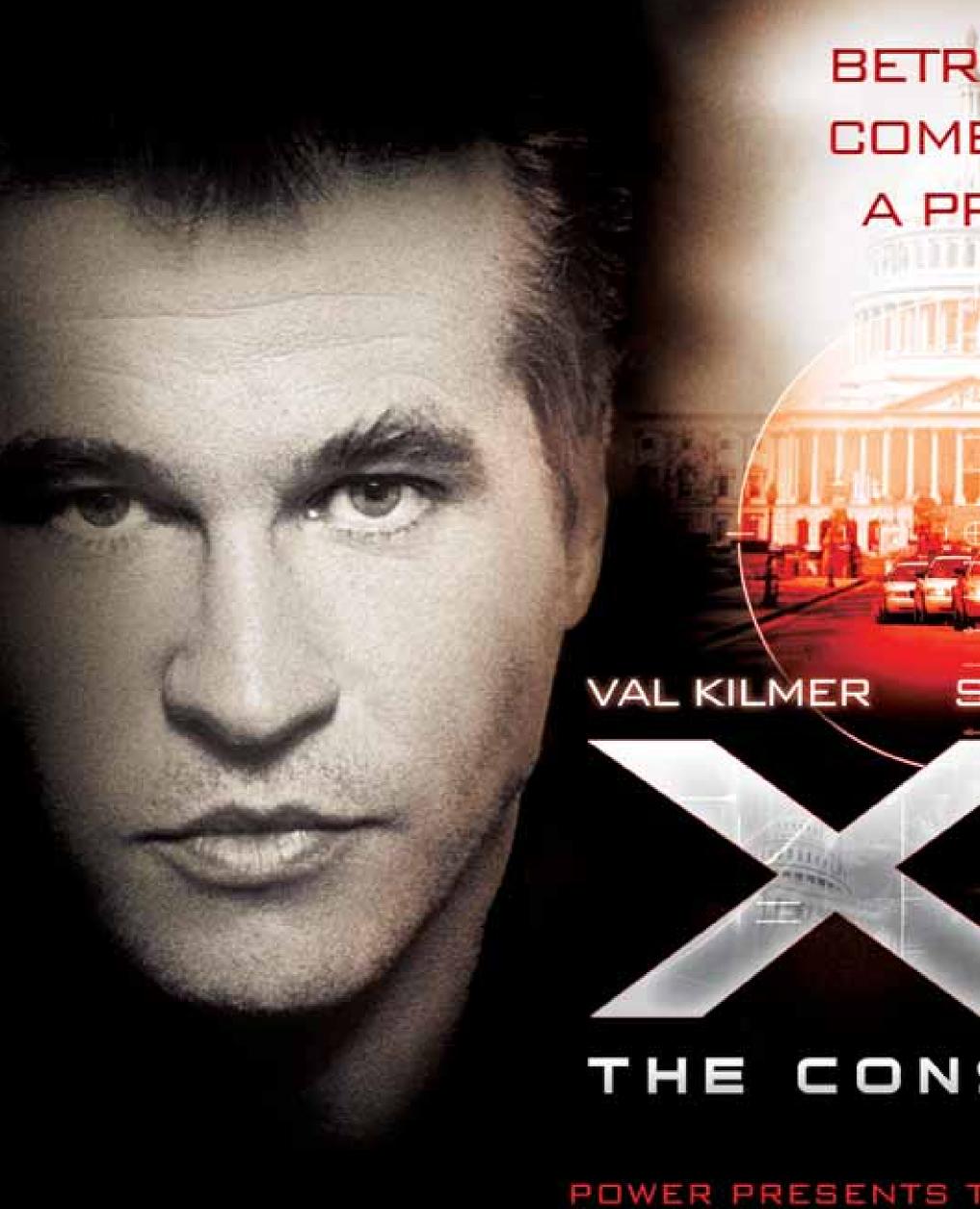












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### See Videos At Sea

### All Aboard for Cruise Line Entertainment

Below-deck Entertainment is Not What It Used to Be

ruise lines often brag about (no pun intended) blowing the competition out of the water with the best live shows, best destinations, and even best food (when it doesn't cause gastroenteritis)... but best in-room entertainment? Strange as it may seem that someone would pay big bucks for a cruise vacation and opt to stay inside, cruise lines provide ample entertainment for those who choose (or are forced) to remain indoors. An increased attendance of cruise companies at last May's Los Angeles Screenings signaled the fact that entertainment in the staterooms (a.k.a. cabins) may start giving on-deck activities a run for their money.

"While we always encourage passengers to get involved in activities, there are points in the day when watching TV is important," said Charly McDonald, Royal Caribbean Cruise Lines' manager of Guest Activities. "We're never going to be able to provide passengers with as much entertainment as they get from their living rooms, but at the very least we need to have sports and news," he said. But Royal Caribbean (RC) goes way beyond the bare minimum when it comes to entertainment. Each one of RC's ships has a broadcast room that, according to McDonald, "rivals a cable channel." Depending on the travel itinerary, each broadcast room is controlled by threeto-five broadcast technicians. They handle satellite channel retransmissions (for channels such as ESPN International and CNN International) as well as transmission of unique-to-Royal Caribbean channels.

Carrie Trimmer, director of Licensing at AETN International, said her company doesn't stream 24/7 channel feeds on cruise lines because of location issues, and instead sticks to individual program sales. "Ships move around more, and often travel into places that don't accept satellite channels," she explained.

All the major cruise lines have their own in-cabin, genre-specific channels to which content providers can sell their wares. In the case of Crystal Cruises, for example, there are a number of unique



A scene from an episode entitled "Extreme Gadgets," from the AETN International Modern Marvels series. The Modern Marvels series has been successful with the cruise lines.

niche channels, including one for comedy, one that features action/adventure movies and a classics channel. In total there are 13 channels running programming 24-hours-a-day.

Following the success of CBS Eye on American — a partnership between CBS and American Airlines — CBS approached Royal Caribbean about doing a similar deal aboard its fleet. RC was happy to oblige. "CBS Eye on Royal Caribbean [a programming block that airs on the RCtv channel] features CBS News, CBS Sports, comedies and

entertainment series, and is updated every two months," explained McDonald.

The TV series release window for cruise lines is similar to the syndication window. Studios will always wait until a series has at least one season on the air before selling it to cruise lines. But thanks to satellite feeds, some live programs can be aired on cruise ships. "Our [satellite] technology allows us to virtually license and receive any event in the world. We have been able to provide Premier League [soccer] championships and the Superbowl," said Chris Hodek,



Pilot Productions' Maria Ishak

a spokesperson for Cunard.

Cruise line movies follow the same release window as airline entertainment. They are usually available about three months after their theatrical debuts. Before the flicks are shown inside cabins, an unedited version is sometimes available on a big movie theater-type screen. According to Crystal Cruises' spokesperson Mimi Weisband, onboard cinemas are becoming rarer as cruise lines make way for bigger money-makers, like casinos and bars. "But we love the big-screen setting of our [134-to-205-seat] Hollywood Theaters," she said.

In-room movies are, like airline movies, often edited to appeal to wider audiences. But since cruises are geared toward more specific demos (i.e. singles or families), some original, non-edited versions are offered. Generally, R-rated movies are offered via the increasingly common in-cabin VoD services. This is the case with Cunard's Queen Mary 2. "It is very seldom we would schedule an R-rated film in [our 500-seat theater] Illuminations," said Hodek. "However some movies may have that appeal and demand. Each movie is analyzed on a case-by-case basis and we will take into consideration the movie's wide appeal and popularity when scheduling it in the theater," he said.

Adult entertainment, which is only available on some cruise lines, but brings in big bucks for those that show it, is always available on a pay-per-view basis only. Parents can often restrict access using their remotes.

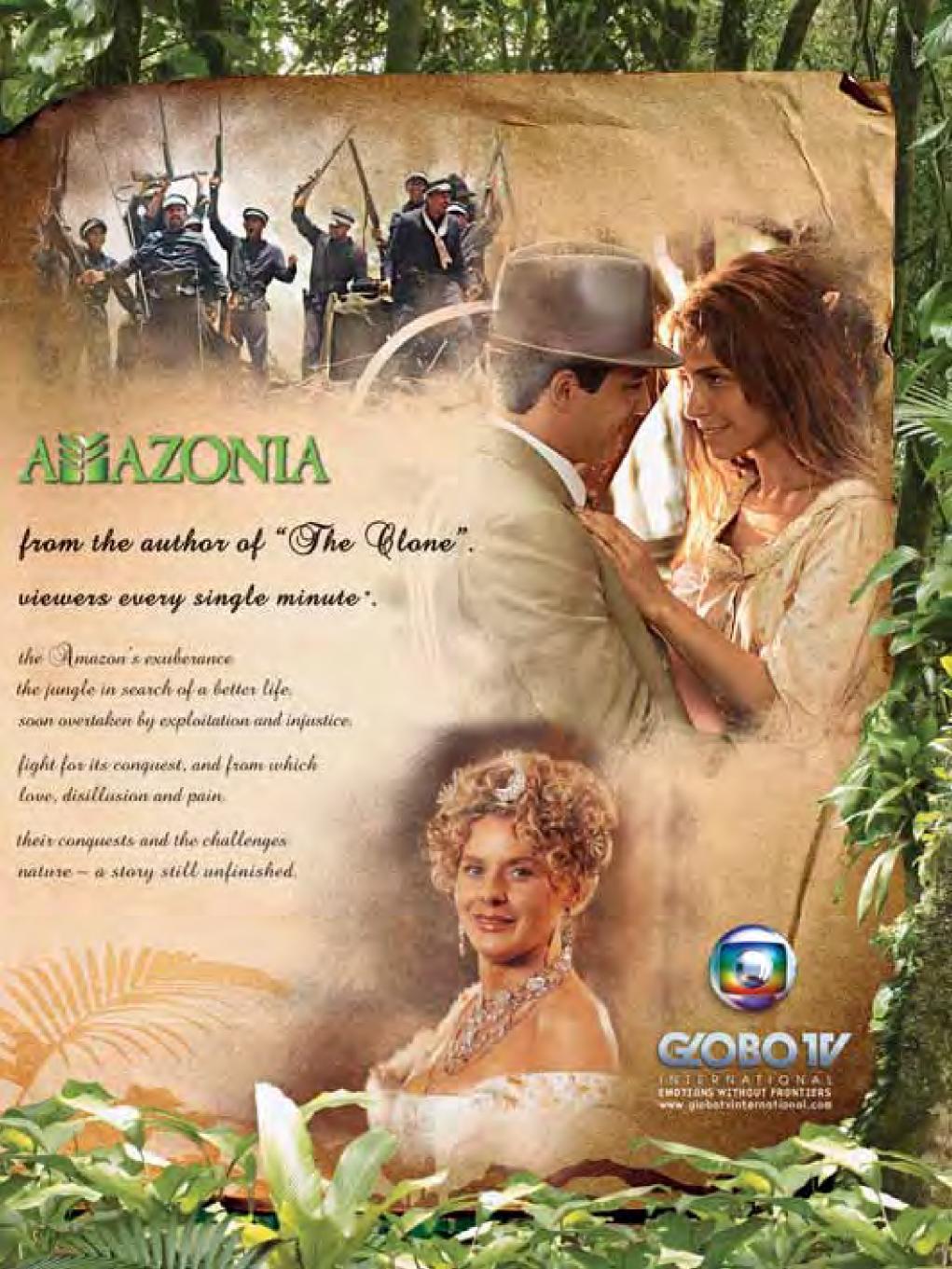
As is the case with airline entertainment, cruise ships depend on agents to sell them content. In fact, distributors almost always farm their cruise sales out to agents, as the amount of money up for grabs doesn't compare to airline sales (cruise line passengers are not as captive an audience, and the number of ships pales in comparison to that of airplanes).

When it comes to the cruise line business model, most lines will pay distributors a monthly fee (with series and movies remaining on-air anywhere from one month to one year). In the case of pay-per-view or VoD titles, the content rights' holders take a piece of the selection fee charged to passengers (usually somewhere between \$10-12 per title).

Two U.S.-based companies handle the majority of cruise entertainment and act as intermediaries between the big cruise lines and content providers. Missouri-based On-Board, which controls 90 percent of the market, is a division of non-theatrical distributor Swank Motion Pictures (which distributes to hospitals, colleges, prisons and school libraries, among other places). The company represents all of the Hollywood studios (sans Fox) and distributes studio movies and TV series to all cruise lines. Representatives sometimes attend the L.A. Screenings too. The much-smaller California-based







### Cruise Line Entertainment

(Continued from Page 36)

Sea Movies counts some of the biggest cruise lines, distributors (AETN International being one of them), and Fox among its clients and works with airline agents Entertainment in Motion and Jaguar Distribution, as well.

Pilot Productions, a London-based producer and distributor of adventure travel guides like *Globe Trekke*rs and *Planet Fo*od, is an obvious fit for closed circuit businesses like cruise line entertainment. "This is new for us,"

said Maria Ishak, Sales and Marketing coordinator at Pilot. "We're working closely to sell our series to the cruise lines. Our programs are an easy fit because the cruise lines can use them to promote their destinations." Ishak added that the show's impressive scenery means they can be used in a non-audio way, as background when guests get ready in their rooms.

"Cruise lines see a value in choosing the most appropriate series for each individual ship," said AETN's Trimmer. "They tend to choose lifestyle programming or programming that directly correlates with the passengers' activities or the ships' destinations." AETN series that have been particularly popular with the cruse lines are *Ocean Liners*, an episode from The History Channel's Modern Marvels series, and *Golf Links in Time*. Crystal Cruises'

Weisband said her company's program specials often feature in-depth explorations of cruise destinations; and around Christmas-time, holiday programming and movies are shown more frequently.

As for the future of airline entertainment, Sea Movies' Baren said that, not unlike every other aspect of the business, it's all about digitalization. "The ships have limitless storage space, which is much better for the industry," he said. "It means there's definitely a higher demand."

This, from a content provider's standpoint, is good news. "Along with airline program sales, it's a business that's been growing in the last few years. Cruise line sales can provide additional revenue out of programs already in our catalogue," said Trimmer. **LCB** •

### Private Equity

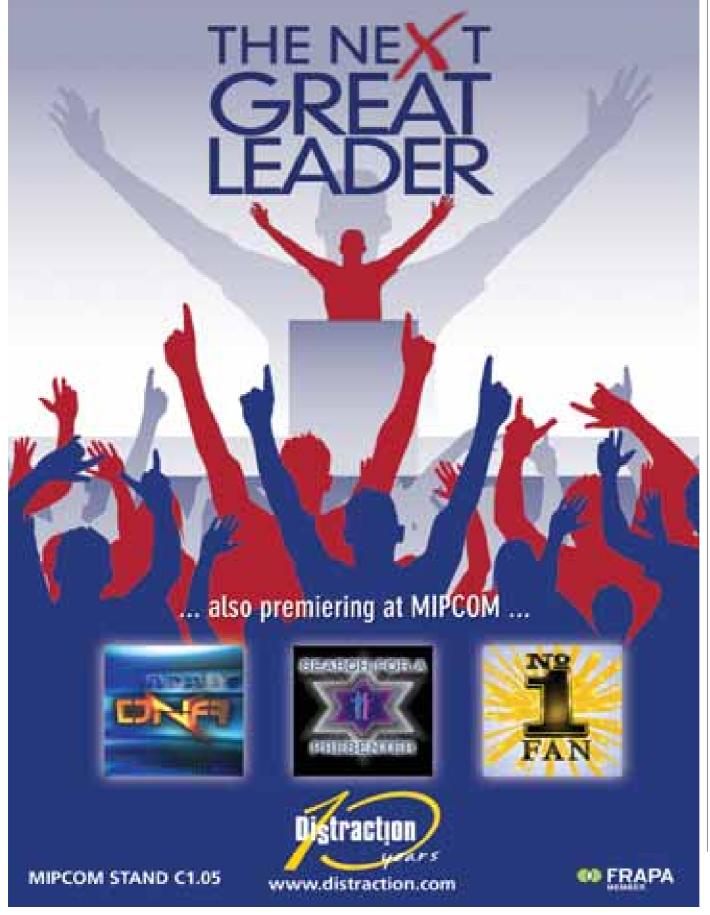
(Continued from Page 22)

by James Packer following the death of his father Kerry. Last October, James sold half of the company's assets (which included Nine Network) to CVC Asia Pacific forming PBL Media in a deal worth A\$4.54 billion (U.S.\$ 3.95 billion).

Back in the States, many of the Hollywood majors have been using private equity funds to hedge the risk involved in some of their most expensive movies, and — as was the case with MGM — buying studios outright. But there are signs that access to such funds is becoming both more difficult and more expensive.

Regardless of that, and the turmoil caused by the crisis in the U.S. mortgage market, the enthusiasm of private equity groups to borrow to acquire seems undimmed. In August, Blackstone closed the world's largestever private equity fund at an eyewatering \$22.7 billion. While it is true that the majority of these funds were raised before the current problems emerged, nothing that has happened recently has stopped KKR, PAI Partners and Carlyle Group from going to the markets for a reported \$52 billion between them to fund leveraged buyouts. The belief is that the current financial instability is good news for these companies, as it will tend to drive down the stock prices of the companies on their wish lists.

These sums are so large, and the companies being bought by the money private equity raises are so blue chip that it is difficult to speculate precisely what will happen if rates go up significantly, and the money underpinning them goes significantly AWOL (absent without leave). Right now one could only speculate that investors pour money into private equity funds because the stock market, with its poor growth and dread of dividends, does not offer a viable return. And since these funds don't find good returns in the stock exchanges (in the past, some funds had to return money to investors for lack of investment opportunities), they are turning their attention to media companies with the clear intent of making a killing on the stock market (a.k.a. taking the companies public, once again) just as soon as the environment is nice and ready.



MIPCOM 2007 Stand 13.12



AGENTE COMERCIAL DE WHILAND INTERNATIONA



### High Hopes for New Series

(Continued from Cover)

Twentieth Century Fox Television Distribution. "They want shows with greater repeatability," she explained. "More than anything, broadcasters want shows that can stick to the U.S. schedule for 13 episodes. It's becoming more difficult to justify spending the money on shows when everything's become chop-chop." Edwards is referring to the fact that many international broadcasters got burned last year after investing in expensive, highly serialized series that never got off the ground in the U.S.

Keith LeGoy, evp of Distribution at Sony Pictures Television International recognized that this is, unfortunately, "an element of the business we're in, which is by nature risky." But, he said, "international buyers have become much more aware of how a show will be launched, marketed and scheduled in the U.S. to best understand its chances for long-term success. Obviously, international broadcasters could decide to wait until the end of the U.S. TV season to better know the winners and losers at that point, but the competition for the winners will be so much fiercer," he said.

Edwards added: "Unless the U.S. networks schedule, promote and stand behind a series it won't have longevity internationally." Edwards pointed specifically to Fox's *Journeyman* (which has been sold to Sky in the U.K.) — about a man who can travel back in



CBS Paramount's Barry Chamberlain, Armando Nunez, Jr., Stephanie Pacheco with Cane's Jimmy Smits at the L.A. Screenings

time — as an example of how a network's scheduling can help boost a new series. NBC gave the series a *Heroes* lead-in, "which is a great thing," she said, thanks to the popularity of *Heroes* and the likelihood that someone will stay tuned in afterwards.

As for the Screenings, Edwards was

pleasantly surprised by the interest international broadcasters showed in *K-Ville*, a series that takes place in post-Hurricane Katrina New Orleans (the series was sold to Channel Five in the U.K.). "We thought it might be difficult to attract international interest, but it's gotten their attention, probably in part because New Orleans is such a legendary city."

As far as the Latin territories were concerned, Disney-ABC International Television's Fernando Barbosa said: "All of the series got great attention. "But," he predicted, "The most popular will probably be *Dirty Sexy Money*— it is a fresh and sexy drama, reminiscent of *Dallas* and *Dynasty*, that uses razorsharp satire to illustrate how scads of money can create a great family... and demolish it. Also, it has a storyline that bears a certain resemblance to the telenovela plotlines."

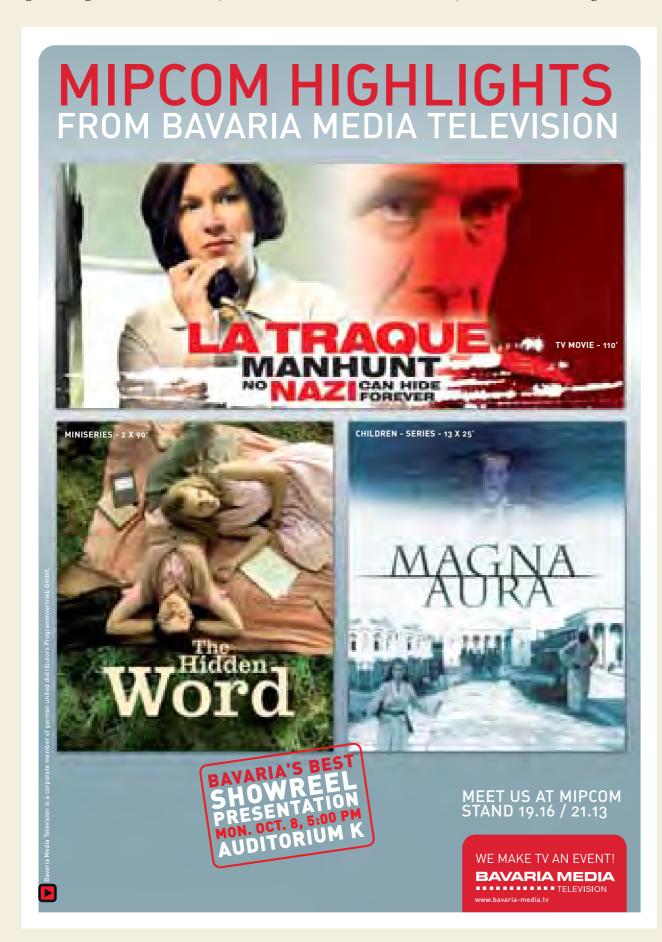
For Sony, the must-have series at the Screenings was Glenn Close-starring *Damages*, which successfully premiered on cabler FX over the summer. "We have great hopes for *Damages* internationally," said LeGoy. "The list of broadcasters who have acquired the show reads like a 'who's who' of top tier networks," he said.

As far as other series he expects to see gobbled up by international broadcasters, LeGoy pointed to *Viva Laughlin*, which is "so different and distinctive that it creates a different ray of sunshine on a broadcaster's schedule. Cashmere Mafia has a cast list and an energy that international broadcasters, advertisers and audiences love; Julianna Margulies' return to a major network TV series is massively anticipated." When asked whether he fears that *Mafia* — which is helmed by Sex and the City's Darren Star, and revolves around a group of successful NYC women — is too similar to NBC Universal's Lipstick Jungle, which is also about successful women and co-created by Star's Sex and the City cohort Candace Bushnell, LeGoy was unabashed. "ER and House are both medical dramas; CSI and Law & Order are both cop shows. You can have multiple shows in the same overall genre. The key question is 'are they good?' Fortunately with Cashmere Mafia we have an amazing show. Plus it's on the network in the U.S. [ABC] that has been the place to launch successful women-— from Desperate oriented shows Housewives to Grey's Anatomy." He added, "the level of quality that a show needs in order to succeed is staggering.

Like Sony, CBS Paramount International Television is also banking on the power of celebrity for two of its



NBC Universal's Belinda Menendez at her company's L.A. Screenings luncheon





#### **High Hopes** for New Series

(Continued from Page 42)

new shows. The first is Cane, a Floridabased family soap starring and executive produced by NYPD Blue's Jimmy Smits. Additionally, former X Files star David Duchovny stars in Californication, part of the CBS Paramount-distributed Showtime catalogue, which is increasingly gaining attention and respect in the international marketplace. One CBS Paramount executive called Californication "a major attraction at the L.A Screenings." The racy series, which has been sold to the U.K.'s Five and



Fernando Barbosa and his sales team at Disney-ABC International Television's Latin America party at the L.A. Screenings

Australia's Ten Network, has caused its own buzz thanks to the Australian Christian Lobby and other groups' protests and urges to boycott advertisers. An even bigger brouhaha took place in America surrounding CBS Paramount's reality series Kid Nation, in which a group of kids takes over an uninhabited U.S. town. The same CBS Paramount exec said Kid Nation is already eliciting formatting rights requests from some territories.

Though dramas and reality series tend to be surer things than comedies overseas, one laffer with international potential is Fox's Back to You, which features wellknown comedy veterans Patricia Heaton (Everybody Loves Raymond) and Kelsey Grammer (*Cheers, Frasier*), and has already been sold to Channel Four in the U.K. "The response in the U.K., Canada and Australia has been really positive," said Edwards. "In the rest of the world, if the networks need a comedy (which they usually do), they'll take this. It helps that our company has one of the biggest international comedy hits of all time in The Simpsons."

Another sitcom with international hopes is Warner Bros.' The Big Bang Theory, about two physics geniuses who befriend a blonde bombshell neighbor.



A celebration of Rosario Ponzio's birthday and his WB career achievements at the L.A. Screenings

According to showrunner and writer Chuck Lorre (who also produces Two and a Half Men, which airs just after Big Bang on CBS), the show, which he insists transcends the stereotypes of pocket protectors and ditzy blondes, "has a universal theme. It appeals to anyone who's felt disenfranchised; like they're on the outside looking in anyone who's felt like they didn't get a copy of the rule book of life." While early reactions have been positive, Lorre thinks his sitcom may be able to achieve the impossible: "We're getting a response from people who don't watch TV shows — young males." And while this could be attributed to the 20something cast, Lorre said it's a combination of writing and casting, "the sum is greater than its parts," he said. "This is not designed to simply pass the time," Lorre said. "People have so many other things to do."

One genre that has almost guaranteed success overseas is the light entertainment/competition format. And there's no shortage of those on American television this fall. One series that was reordered after a summer launch is The Singing Bee, which, according to Phil Gurin, the show's producer, "is a [selfcontained] variety show meets game show," with a full band and a dozen dancers performing alongside contestants who try to sing the right words to any given song. Gurin said it would be the perfect "one-two program punch" with another popular format like *Dancing with* the Stars. The Gurin Company sold the paper format to ITV in England even before selling it to NBC in the U.S. "It's extremely rare to sell a paper format internationally, and I can't remember the last time it happened in the U.K," Gurin said. Zeal Entertainment has signed on to distribute the format internationally. Gurin said he hopes to create a brand around Bee, similar to his own The Weakest Link, and will do that through a U.S. merchandising campaign that will roll out around Christmas. His upcoming fall/winter formats include Wanna Bef!



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### High Hopes for New Series

(Continued from Page 44)

(based on long-running and highly popular German series *Wetten dass...*? and starring British comic duo Ant and Dec), which is being internationally distributed by ZDF, and reality/game show hybrid *Do you Trust Me*?, which CBS Paramount is distributing.

Undoubtedly there will be big hits, embarrassing flops and a handful of surprises in the U.S.'s fall schedule. Now the trick is predicting which will be which.

### NEW U.S.TV SEASON ANNOUNCED WITH A BIG BANG AT L.A. SCREENINGS

Studio executives never tire of asking some of the (increasing number) of international buyers why they fly all the way to Los Angeles to disparage the new U.S.TV season's slate — ITV's Jay Kandola for one reported that, "The 2006 L.A. Screenings were a fiasco. Too much money chasing too little quality product." Buyers could easily screen new shows from the comfort of their own offices and the studios would gladly provide them with DVDs.

While on one hand, the sellers' stance is understandable, they shouldn't dismiss the appeal for the buyers of being lavishly entertained in Hollywood while complaining all the while.

It's not like the studios take shortcuts when welcoming buyers. In addition to keeping them on the lots for breakfast and lunch, the studios stage elaborate evening parties that only Hollywood could afford and, most importantly, organize.

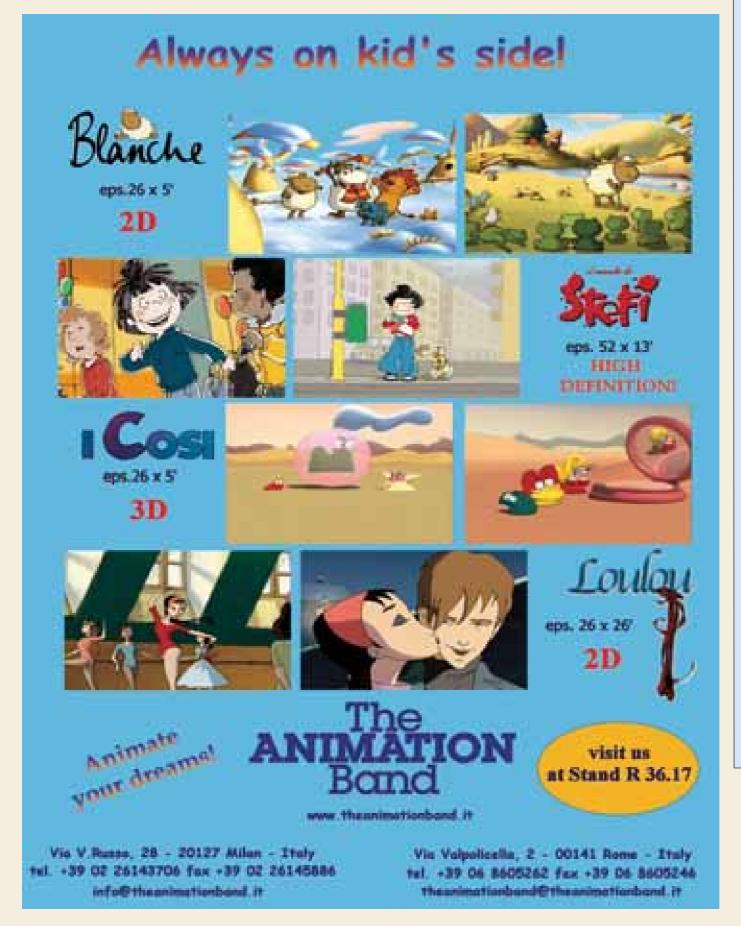
So, the L.A. Screenings represents not only the premier business hotspot for the studios, but a show of Hollywood's strength. Today, perhaps only the Cannes Film Festival comes close to the L.A. Screenings, which, incidentally, is a purely organic (i.e. not formally organized) market.

In addition to the L.A. Screenings, buyers have recently started attending the preceding network Upfronts in New York. This is despite the fact that studios happily provide a satellite feed in L.A. But as

is the case with DVDs of the new series, the simulcast cannot replace the excitement of seeing it all in person.

This year, welcoming international buyers with parties were Paramount, Disney-ABC (with two events: one for the general contingent, the other geared toward Latin American buyers), and Sony Pictures Television Int'l. Plus, parties organized by independents, such as a wine-tasting, a telenoveleros bash and those by Telefe and International Media. These are in addition to other activities such as VideoAge's breakfast meeting, hotel suite parties and the independents' invitation-only screenings. All of which translated into an extremely busy 10-day schedule.

And, by the way, buyers' tendency to complain is only a result of not wanting to visibly show how much they enjoy both the new TV shows and the hospitality—at least not until after the financial negotiations! ITV's Jay Kandola also reported that it took her nine months "to persuade [the studios] that their financial expectations had finally gotten out of control."



### Cable vs. Cinema

# MSOs Storm In With Day-and-Date Demands

By Leah Hochbaum Rosner

t an industry conference last spring, Stephen Burke, president of mega cable multiple systems operator (MSO) Comcast Corp., told an audience that a number of studios were "very interested" in the idea of allowing cable providers to charge viewers to watch movies at home the same day as their theatrical releases. He went on to assert that this move would actually increase studio revenue — but didn't explain exactly how this would work prompting both theater owners and studios to freak out and speak out.

Two of the largest theater chains in the U.S., National Amusements Inc. and Regal Entertainment Group, said they'd simply refuse to play films that were made available simultaneously in homes. While neither got specific as to their reasons, it's fairly obvious that it wouldn't make economic sense for a patron to pay the expensive ticket price for an in-theater showing when they could watch a flick more cost-effectively from the comfort of their own homes, if one takes into account inexpensive popcorn, drinks and, for some, a savings of babysitting costs, for a night out at the movies.

For cablers, on the other hand, it would make perfect sense. Comcast reportedly wanted to charge \$30-\$50 per screening (with a good portion going to the studios) — a hefty sum for a single viewing (but still cheaper than a night out for two or more people). Some would contend that releasing movies in homes on the same day as their theatrical releases would surely reduce piracy, since would-be bootleggers simply wouldn't have the incentive to reproduce the stolen fare. This day-and-date strategy has, in recent years, been proven to work for international theatrical releases. More and more studios debut movies in multiple countries at the same time so as to ensure that pirates cannot get their grubby fingers on copies of films. But is that enough of a reason to release films at home on the date of their movie premieres?

A slew of industry insiders have gone on record in recent years, extolling the virtues of maintaining the current system. Tom Freston, former CEO of Viacom Inc. was quoted as saying: "The [release] windows system has served the film industry quite well. And from a profitability standpoint, the studios have been a great beneficiary... We don't see any reason to change that." Jon Feltheimer, CEO of Lionsgate told *The Financial Times.* "We've got to protect the windows because the system still works." Dick Cook, chairman of Walt Disney Studios told reporters at last year's Reuters Media Summit that "the theatrical experience is still the most important experience in the pipeline. We are comfortable where it is now."

Debates about the ever-shrinking window between a film's theatrical release and its DVD release have raged for years. These days, four months typically pass

We as cinema operators believe the current model of tiered release works best for the movie industry — John Fithian, president of the National Association of Theatre Owners.

before a movie is released on home video or DVD. Studios and theaters contend that shrinking the window any more would have disastrous effects on a film's box office. Conversely, home video distribs would like to move up a movie's home release date, and ride on the theatrical publicity wave in order to get their money quicker.

While no compromise has yet been reached that truly appeases both sides, John Fithian, president of the Washington, D.C.-based National Association of Theatre Owners (NATO), which represents more than 29,000 movie screens in the U.S., and additional cinemas in more than 40 countries throughout the world, believes that the status quo should be maintained when it comes to windows.

"We as cinema operators believe the current model of tiered release works best for the movie industry," said Fithian. "When movies are made for theaters first, they're made differently. They have bigger budgets, longer production schedules, etc. And consumers know the difference."

Fithian also touched on the buzz that theatrical releases generate, something that would surely be missed in an environment where anyone with a remote had the same access to in-theater movies. "Big pictures like *Harry Potter* benefit from big screens because movies are seen in the best possible environment," he said. "It's a communal experience. You can see who's laughing and who's crying. This brings more attention to a movie."

Fithian insisted that the Comcast proposal is "a stale issue now." He noted that he himself called Comcast, as did several NATO members, "and the company's retreated somewhat from the statement it made publicly."

Indeed it has. Jenni Moyer, a spokesperson for Comcast, recently said that Burke's comments were simply misinterpreted. "We are always interested in working with studios to find ways to shorten windows," she said. "[Burke] was speculating as to what we *could* do, not what we *will* do."

But even as Comcast tries to distance itself from Burke's statement, the company is already hard at work on an experimental initiative that measures the impact these day-and-date releases have on viewing rates. The company has partnered with a number of studios, including NBC Universal, Warner Bros., Paramount, Disney and Lionsgate, to release movies on Comcast On Demand on the same day as their DVD releases. Recent titles include Warner's TMNT, a modern take on The Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles, and Unaccompanied Minors, a holiday film starring Wilmer Valderrama.

"We wanted to see how content providers and distributors could work together to expand the availability of programming," said Moyer. Though she wasn't specific, Moyer claimed that thus far, the trial run has been a resounding success for Comcast.

The company also joined forces with



Stephen Burke, Comcast Corp.'s president and chief operating officer

IFC Entertainment in 2006 to offer *IFC in Theaters*, marking the first time selected independent films were made available (for a fee) in customers' homes through Comcast On Demand on the same day they were released in theaters.

"IFC has done very well with dayand-date," said Moyer. "One film even earned the equivalent of two weeks of theatrical cash flow On Demand." Moyer believes this partnership is a real boon both to makers of independent features and "to people without typical access to art-house films."

NATO's Fithian saw things differently. "Some have argued that small independent pictures with limited marketing and distribution would benefit from simultaneous release," he said. "But there's a danger in branding them as small pictures. They lose the opportunity to become surprise hits like March of the Penguins or My Big Fat Greek Wedding. The surprise hit phenomenon will be greatly reduced if not all but eliminated."

Fithian recalled the lesson learned with Steven Soderbergh's *Bubble*, a 2006 flick distributed by 2929 Entertainment which was released concurrently in theaters, on cable and satellite television and on DVD. "They spent more than \$1.5 million making that movie and it made less than \$200,000 during its cinema run — and even less than that on DVD," he said. "If a Soderbergh picture would have had a chance to grow and establish itself, we believe it would have done better."

No one can say for sure. But whether or not a movie is released in theaters and on television at the same time, even those at Comcast agree that there's still something magical about chomping on buttered popcorn from an oversized tub while staring wide-eyed at a big screen. "At the end of day, will day-and-date releases replace the social experience of going to a theater?" asked Moyer. "No. But with certain movies, you will come home from the theater and want to watch them again immediately."

### Latin America Focus

### Argentina Report

#### Cable's Jornadas Mix Biz & Tech Growth

his year's Jornadas de Cable had two novelties: a change of date and location. Due to Argentina's October presidential elections, the cable and satellite organizing associations — Cámara Argentina de Distribuidores de Señales Satelitales (CADiSSa) and Asociación Argentina de Televisión por Cable (ATVC) — decided to move up the annual cable TV meeting to the end of September from its traditional October or November dates. In addition, the venue was changed from last year's unsuitable Sheraton to the Hilton Hotel in Buenos Aires. The event, which gathers executives from all over Argentina and throughout Latin America, showcases programming, technology and services through its exhibits, workshops and academic debates where executives analyze and discuss topics related to the development of the field.

Before the event, Eduardo Suárez, general manager of CADiSSa, said the organizers chose to hold the event before the elections, to draw attention to the country's cable and satellite industries before its change in Presidents.

Patricia Thompson, Affiliate Sales and Distribution vp at Pramer

Jornadas also serves Argentina-based Claxson as a platform for closing affiliation deals with cable operators. For his part, David Guerra, Affiliate Sales director of Sparrowhawk Media Latin America (a division of the London-based company) stressed the importance of Jornadas for his firm, which has more than 90 percent cable TV penetration in Argentina.

Enrique R. Martínez, evp and general manager of Discovery Networks Latin America/U.S. Hispanic, said that at Jornadas his company showcased a campaign called Descubre el Verde, which will be presented as Planet Green. It consists of special programs, interactive tools and Internet sites that focus on the "green" lifestyle. The U.S. launch of an environmentally dedicated channel has been scheduled for 2008. "This initiative will be supported by an investment of U.S.\$50 million from Discovery Communications for original content that deals with the preservation of the world's environment," he said.

Channel provider Pramer of Buenos Aires and Atlanta, Georgia-based pay-TV service LAPTV attend Jornadas to strengthen bonds. "It's a great opportunity to gather together all the people who make up the industry and to meet with the different operators. Of course

this year was a larger event because the market has changed, but it's always a good opportunity to show the new things we're doing. Technology has greatly influenced our business," stated Emilce Cebrian, executive director of LAPTV South Region. LAPTV focused on its HD Movie City, and its premium channels.

Patricia Thompson, affiliate sales and distribution vp at Pramer, said Jornadas is the right place to be because "the Argentine market is the sector that has developed most in the last few years.



Emilce Cebrian, executive director of LAPTV South Region

#### **TURNOVERS DURING 2006**

An official document distributed by ACTV, shows the 2006 turnover of Argentina's major cable TV operators and telecommunications companies:

| Major Cable TV operators   | 1.900 billion Argentine pesos (U.S.\$603 million) |
|----------------------------|---|
| Grupo Telefónica Argentina | 8.800 billion Argentine pesos (U.S.\$3 billion)   |
| Grupo Telecom Argentina    | 7.500 billion Argentine pesos (U.S.\$2 billion)   |
| Grupo Slim Argentina       | 4.400 billion Argentine pesos (U.S.\$1.4 billion) |

At Jornadas, ATVC and CADiSSA celebrated 15 years of the ATVC Awards, this time with the slogan: Porque la televisión es por cable (Because television is on cable). The awards, which decorate the best Argentine and Latin American TV productions, included the addition of a new category that recognizes the participation of students of social communications. MR

### The New Claxson, Post-Surgery

uenos Aires-based multimedia provider Claxson has had a very hectic year since deciding to sell seven of its 12 channels — Fashion TV, HTV, Infinito, I.Sat, MuchMusic, Retro and Space to Time Warner's Turner Broadcasting System last December. While the two companies have agreed upon a \$235 million price tag for the transactions, they are awaiting final approval by the Argentine government. Meanwhile, Classon, which is mainly owned by Venezuelan conglomerate Cisneros Group of Companies (in addition to Texas-based investment fund Hicks, Muse, Tate & Furst and various other investors), has already announced two new ventures: basic cable channel Lifestyle and online video portal Mixplay.

In order to retain its reputation as a high ratings-getter, Classon will stick to what it does best — appealing to youth and young adults. The company is hoping this will be achieved by way of a cable channel. "Lifestyle, a joint

venture between Claxson and Playboy TV Latin America & Iberia -- itself a joint venture between Playboy Entertainment Group and Claxson -- is the first nonerotic [and non-scrambled] channel from Playboy. It is designed to showcase different types of lifestyle programming, including tourism, fashion, entertainment, technology and cars, among other things," said Mariano Varela, general manager of Playboy TV Latin America/Iberia and evp of Claxson's pay-TV group. Classon has been in the process of launching the channel for over two years, and the company conducted its fair share of market research in that time. "Our schedule consists of almost 40 percent original material, which has a Latin American touch without losing its worldwide appeal and universal point of view," Varela said.

As to what types of programming the channel will acquire, Varela said he is open to a range of topics. "I know we're competing against various channels aiming at the same target. We will no doubt compete with strong channels like Sony, E! Entertainment or Fox Life," said Varela.

Before launching on September 30, Lifestyle was available



Mariano Varela of Claxson and Playboy Entertainment Group's Playboy TV Latin America & Iberia

on a trial basis for more than three months while deals were sealed with the region's main cable operators. Though it results from an association between Playboy TV Latin America and Claxson, Turner handles ad sales, and sells the channel to cable systems and DTH platforms.

On the other

(Continued on Page 50)



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### Latin America Focus

### Argentina Report

#### The New Claxson

(Continued from Page 48)

hand, Claxson's digital platform ESDC, which handles all things related to broadband and the Internet, created Mixplay (www.mixplay.tv), a video-based entertainment website that targets Spanish-speaking users. Backed by Microsoft and Intel, Mixplay looks to satisfy the demands of users who wish to watch professionally produced content online. The site distributes and sells videos protected by the Digital

Rights Management system.



ESDC's Patricia Tomasini

Mixplay is one of only a few online video stores approved by Microsoft for Windows Media Player. When launching Windows Vista, Microsoft included Mixplay in its Media Center, enabling users to navigate the portal by means of a remote control. Users benefit from all the operating system has to offer by being able to connect their PCs to TV sets.

"This audiovisual content site is having great reception from users in Latin America," said Patricia Tomasini, Marketing and Production manager at ESDC. "We've got more than 500,000 unique users [ed. note: EDSC wouldn't clarify whether that was per month or total]



unique users [ed. note: EDSC wouldn't Claxson's new channel, Lifestyle, focuses on food, fashion, tourism and more.

who have access to a catalogue of more than 1,000 videos. We're adding more clips, we're setting new content alliances with other companies and increasing our monthly quota. We look forward to increasing our video distribution, both for free access and content sale through pay-per-view or Internet subscriptions," she said.

But Classon representatives declined to divulge specifics about their financials, including the money they're investing in programming, so many details remain up for discussion. MR

### Brazil Report

### Scalamandré Showcases Globo's Int'l Division

*ideoAge* was recently invited to visit the new São Paulo, Brazil offices of Rede Globo, the largest TV network in Brazil and Latin America, and the fourth largest in the world.

This visit overlapped with *VideoAge's* participation at the Forum Brasil TV conference (*see related story on page 52*) and coincided with the PR push to promote Globo's restructured (and relocated from Rio) international TV department, as well as the company's striking new building, erected next to the network's news studio and inaugurated in May 2007 (dedicated to the media group's late founding father, Roberto Marinho).

At the São Paulo studios, Rede Globo produces two of its four national newscasts (*Jornal Hoje* and *Jornal de Globo*); all of its weather reports; its local news (three daily editions, including *Antena Paulista*); its magazine shows and documentaries; popular early-morning farmers' news, *Globo Rural*; and special events' coverage, such as Carnival, or Papal visits.

In the larger Rio de Janeiro studios — named *Projac* and located in Jacarepagua, a community outside Rio — Globo produces its popular telenovelas and two national news programs: morning show *Bom Dia Brasil* and primetime newscast *Jornal Nacional*. There are 6,000 employees at this particular studio.

Globo takes new pride in its international department, which has been revitalized and expanded under the leadership of Ricardo Scalamandré, who had all 30 of his staff members transferred from their smaller Rio offices in the Jardim Botanico area to the larger quarters on the seventh floor of the new São Paulo building.

The Brazil-born Scalamandré (who also has Italian origins), was re-hired at Globo in 1985 — while traveling in Italy — by Globo's current boss, Roberto Irineu Marinho, then a vice president in charge of Italian TV network TeleMontecarlo (now, under new owners, dubbed La7), which was owned at the time by Rede Globo.

It is interesting to note that the international division of Rede Globo started in Rome, Italy in the early '80s under

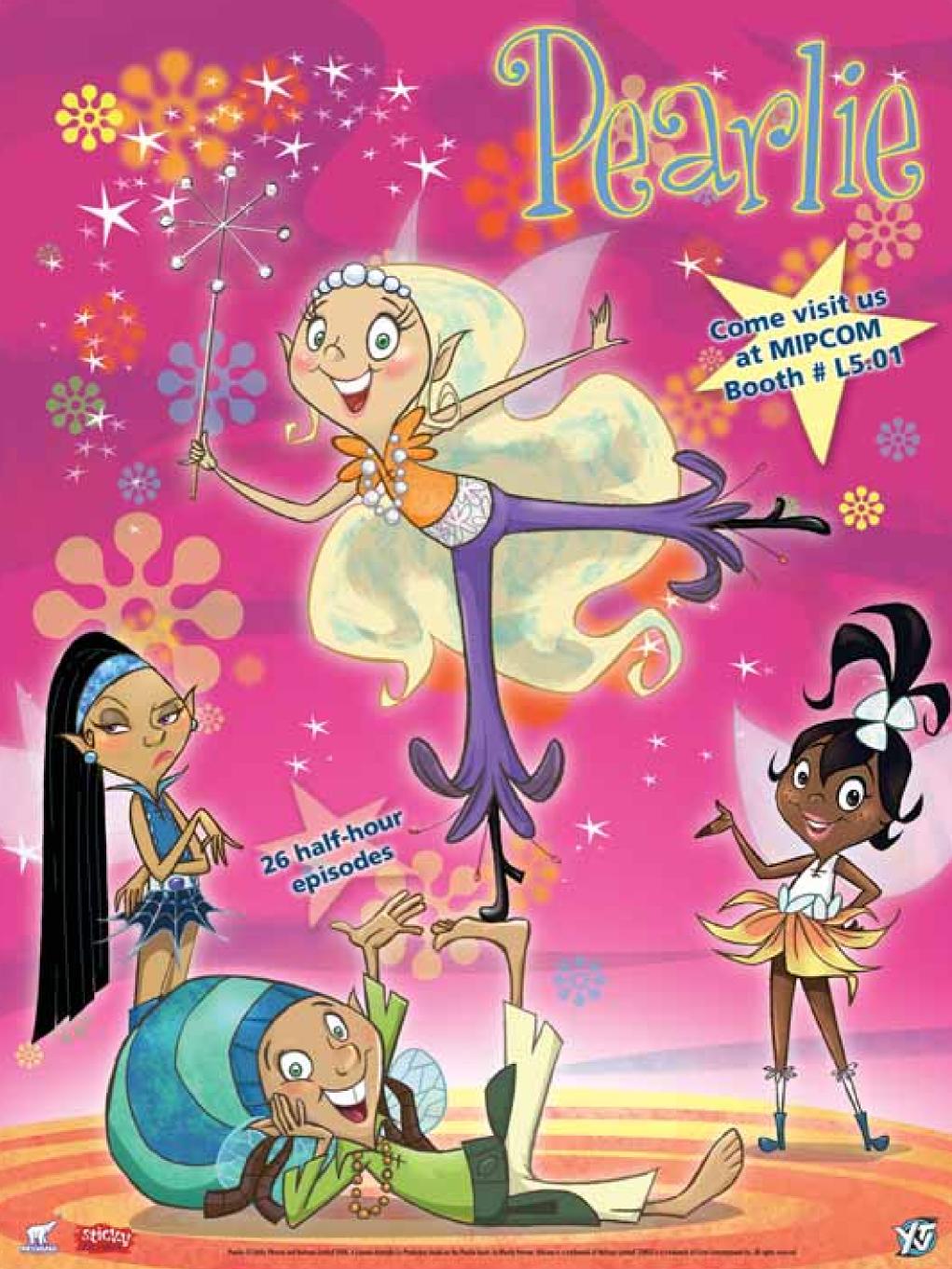


Ricardo Scalamandré (right) gives an interview

the guidance of another Paulista of Italian origins, Roberto Filippelli.

Scalamandré began his career at TV Globo in 1971. In 1983 he moved to competing television network SBT as an account executive for spot sales in his native São Paulo and, in 1985, he went back to TV Globo. In 1991 he left once again for an executive position at advertising agency BBD&O. He only remained there for a year before starting his own company, called Multmedia Planning. In 1998 Scalamandré returned

(Continued on Page 52)



### Latin America Focus

### Brazil Report

#### Globo's Int'l Division

(Continued from Page 50)

to Globo with the task of executing the first phase of restructuring its international operations.

Scalamandré explained that the move to São Paulo represented the second phase of a restructuring, and is consistent with the international department's mandate of becoming a major revenue producer since, until he took it over in 1999, the division "was not viewed as a profit center" internally.

Additionally, to the benefit of his division, São Paulo is the headquarters of all of Rede Globo's advertising sales, including spot sales for TV Globo Internactional, the TV channel directed at Brazil's expatriates, which also falls under Scalamandré's responsibility.

It was pointed out that 30 percent of TV Globo Internacional's TV revenues come from advertising; the rest comes from subscriptions (440,000 worldwide, Japan).

from subscriptions (440,000 worldwide, including 6,000 in Europe and 32,000 in

Within Scalamandré's division, Marcelo Spinola heads Globo's international TV channel, while content sales for Globo TV International are handled by Raphael Correa (including formats, such as the popular *It's Your Call*, now airing in the U.K., Spain and China). International co-productions are handled by Flavio Rocha (who is currently commuting between the Rio and São Paulo offices).

It was also explained that Globo's co-production deals are strictly international, whereas only selected presales can air in the domestic market. For instance, in 2002, Italy's Mediaset pre-acquired telenovela *Terra Esperanza* with the understanding that

Globo would produce at least 20 episodes in Italy. Recent co-productions include *Vale Todo* with Telemundo in the U.S. and *Os Maias* with Portugal's SIC — both of these

shows are available exclusively for the foreign market.

According to Scalamandré, coproductions that could be used for the domestic market are what he called "miniseries" (up to 30 episodes) and "microseries" (up to five episodes), whereas telenovelas consist of 180 episodes that are subsequently reduced to 150 for international sales. For export, each episode must be 45-minutes long, but the length of episodes aired in Brazil varies according to the lead-in and follow-up programming, which, especially if they concern football (soccer), could potentially cut the telenovela down to 30 minutes.

As to new concepts and stories that can be developed into future series, Scalamandré said: "The range is wide. In

the last five years, for example, 4,000 Brazilian soccer players have been hired by teams all around the world, offering new sources of programming opportunities."

But today, Globo's major challenge is to counteract the loss of value in its TV commercials by including product placement in telenovelas. In this regard, Scalamandré predicted that the positive effects of this development will extend to traditional advertising for exported programs as well: "It wouldn't be smart for a company — such as an international bank, for instance — *not* to take advantage of a traditional commercial spot in a program that features a scene which takes place in a branch, to explain all of its services," he said.



Some of Globo TV International's staff in their new home, on the seventh floor of the São Paolo building

### **Trade Show Success Reflects Mart Potential**

razil is a difficult TV territory to penetrate; yet it is a vast market with many opportunities for international producers and distributors. It requires personal attention, a large investment and a constant presence. Regardless, it's a risk worth taking.

As a territory, Brazil counts 40 million TVHH with 4.2 million Pay-TVHH subscribers and a total of 10 national TV networks. Even though its theatrical market is small — estimated at U.S.\$285 million per year — the 2002 success of *Cidade de* 

Venevision's Cesar Diaz

Deus, by São Paulo production company o2, has put Brazilian cinema on the international map, especially considering that, since 1993 Brazilian production companies have been able to deduct money invested in films from their income taxes.

One way to keep one's fingers on the pulse of the Brazilian entertainment industry is to actively participate in one or more of the TV trade shows that recently have sprung up throughout the country. One of these is the increasingly popular Forum Brasil. Its eighth annual edition was held at the end of May in its traditional São



The floor during one of the coffee breaks

Paulo venue, unfortunately not as an inexpensive city as Rio de Janeiro. But, on the plus side, with some 19.6 million people, São Paulo is Brazil's largest city and the second largest in the Americas (after Mexico City) and thus a key TV market.

With a 60 percent increase over last year's numbers, Forum Brasil counted 1,000 attendees. Guests hailed from the U.S., Canada, France, Argentina, the U.K., Switzerland, Portugal, Spain, Russia and Chile and, of course, Brazil.



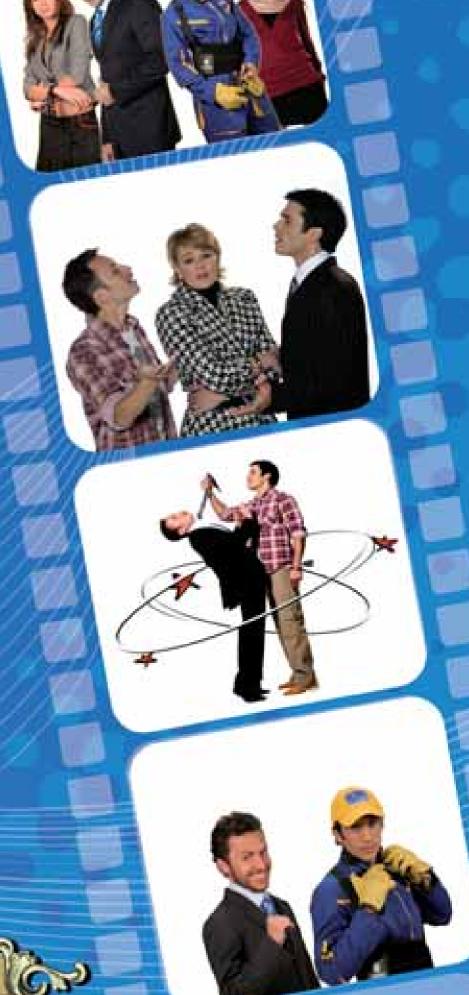


Newly

Newly POOR 62

Telenovela (120 X 1h)





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### Latin America Focus

### Brazil Report

#### **Trade Show Success**

The Forum's schedule reflected a traditional model: Exhibitors, screenings, conferences and pitching sessions. The event had 32 seminars and 62 speakers featuring producers, distributors and representatives from free-to-air and pay-TV channels, trade associations and government agency representatives.

An additional international panel of judges chose the best of 15 pitches in the following categories: Documentary, TV Series and Animation. In the doc category, A Margem do Lixo, about sanitation workers in São Paulo, won the coveted award; Os Buchas, about the effects of women on the young adult male, was rewarded in the TV Series category; and the winning Animation project was *Os Abelhudos*, about a group of bees acting as doctors.

In total, 110 productions were available for viewing by the delegates (representing a 60 percent increase from last year). The majority of those (42) were documentaries.

The event's highlight was an official tribute to Telemundo, the NBC-owned Spanish-language network in the U.S.

Foreign delegates were all housed in the same hotel a few minutes away from Centro de Exposicoes Frei Caneca, the convention center where the Forum was held, on the fourth level of a shopping mall. Shuttle busses served the venues, but without a posted schedule and no way to identify the shuttles, many resorted to taking taxis. The convention center was a good trek from the hotel, if one wanted to walk, but the weather was unusually cold with temperatures reaching zero centigrade, often

The two-day affair was sprinkled with coffee and hors-d'oeuvres breaks, but in



Granada International's Flavio Medeiros



TPI's Larry Higgs and Ron Alexander

between the intervals, the widely sought-after coffee was hard to come by.

Among the 21 exhibitors were the U.K.'s BBC and Granada, Portugal's TVI-NBP, Germany's DW, and, from the U.S., TPI, HBO and Telemundo. Plus, present without booths were companies such as Venezuela's Venevision and Argentina's Telefe, in addition to some major Brazilian TV broadcasters, such as Record TV and Bandeirantes (TV Globo, SBT and TV Brasil participated with stands).

The next edition of Forum Brasil will take place June 3-5, 2008.



**BRAZIL HIGHLIGHTS** 

180 million **Population** TV Homes 40 million Pay-TV Subscribers 4.2 million National Networks 10 Commercial Broadcasters 283 **Educational Broadcasters** 



The "Globalization of Ideas" panel with Ricardo Scalamandré and Telefe's Gonzalo Cilley, among others



Globo's Raphael Correa, TVI's José Eduardo Moniz and Telemundo's Marcos Santana address attendees during a Latin American production seminar



### Latin America Focus

### Brazil Report

### Pay-TV Trade Show Establishes Triple-Play

razil is well prepared to handle new technologies and prove to the world that it can face convergence with confidence. At least that was the idea conveyed at ABTA 2007, the 15th annual conference and exhibition dedicated to the Latin American pay-TV, electronic media and digital services market, held last August in São Paulo, Brazil.

More than 90 speakers discussed topics such as convergence, the impact of digital free- and pay-TV and the new programming rules in Brazil. Among the 50 exhibitors were Hallmark Channel, HBO Brasil, MGM Networks Latin America, Pramer SCA, Cisco, Fox Latin America, Disney & ESPN Media Networks de Brasil, Sky and Turner.

As an exhibitor, Brazil-based, multi-service provider TVA, took the opportunity to celebrate a 20 percent increase in subscribers, and showed an interactive remote control created for its TV, pay-per-view, Internet and VoD programming that gives access to convergent services for high-definition channels. One of TVA's most interesting innovations shown at ABTA was a new service free to customers, called Programming Alarm, which notifies subscribers when their favorite program is about to start.

For its part, MGM Networks Latin America celebrated its 10-year operation in Brazil and announced the transfer of its programming to a digital platform.



Also in a festive mood was Sparrowhawk Media, which celebrated its Hallmark Channel hitting the one-million-subscriber mark in Brazil, and looked forward to the launch of its new children's animation channel, Kids Co.

There were spates of announcements as well. Spain's Telco, Telefonica Brazil – which is also a digital TV operator

offering more than 60 digital channels and the option of premium services — announced, among other things, that they are currently carrying out trials on optic fiber in São Paulo in the hopes of offering clients IPTV. They also showcased a device called Telefónica Trío, which allows users to obtain triple-play services: telephony, broadband Internet and TV.

Similarly, Fox Latin America Channels representatives announced the acquisition



A scene from an ABTA panel

of 51 percent of Telecolombia — which will be renamed Fox Telecolombia — and celebrated the entry of the Sci-Fi Channel into Sky Brasil.

Turner introduced its new sports channel, Woohoo, and shared its new project, Cartoon Networks Games, which consists of interactive TV games wherein a digital decoder remote control turns into a joystick.

On the recreational side, Latin American pay-TV and satellite network distributor Pramer hosted an exclusive lunch for operators in the region, in order to boost the penetration of the Film and Arts channel.

Among the speakers at the trade show were Mauricio Ramos, CEO of VTR; Rómulo Pontual, vp of CTO, which is part of DirecTV; Luiz Eduardo Baptista, president of SKY; Antonio Valente, president of Telefónica; Alberto Pecegueiro, general director of Globosat. These and others participated at 12 thematic sessions, which were attended by 758 participants.

The event attracted 11,147 people, and was sponsored by Globosat, NET Brasil, Canais Abril, SETA (*Sindicato das Empresas de TV por Assinatura*) and Brasil Telecom.

### Venezuela Report

as an oil strike in 2002-2003.

### Chavez's Pet Station, A Ratings Failure

n late May, Venezuela's private television station Radio Caracas Television (RCTV) was replaced by state-funded Televisora Venezolana Social, or TVes (see *VideoAge*'s May 2007 issue for more details). The name is pronounced "te ves," which means "you see yourself" in Spanish.

Venezuelan president Hugo Chavez reportedly pulled the plug on the popular RCTV due to the station's harsh criticism of the government. Chavez accused RCTV of supporting a coup against him in April 2002, as well



After going off the air, RCTV started broadcasting on cable, satellite and even over the Internet

Chavez hopes the new station, TVes, will usher in a government-approved era in Venezuelan broadcasting. The 24-hour channel, which broadcasts sports, children's programming, movies, news, music, drama and cartoons, began broadcasting with the national anthem, and continues to play the anthem three times a day every day (at 6 a.m., noon and midnight).



President Hugo Chavez

The Venezuelan government claims that the new station aims to portray the identity of Venezuelans, but according to general news reports, TVes hasn't caught on with actual Venezuelans. The station has even struggled to reach 10 percent of RCTV's viewers.



ambini da 2 e 6 anni. Altoni havole, fiction I tanto altro

### DISCOP Dispatch

## Trade Show Success Mirrors Market's Growth

t only took 15 years, but DISCOP organizers finally managed to persuade their host hotel to open up the emergency stairs to alleviate the crowded elevators and improve traffic flow.

At DISCOP 2007, held as usual at the Sofitel Hotel in Budapest, Hungary at the end of June, there were 418 more participants than in 2006, for a total of 1,522 executives. Among the 242 exhibiting companies, there were 89 new exhibitors. Organizers had to expand the number of suites beyond the fire doors on all three floors, in order to accommodate the overflow.

Next year, a fourth floor will likely be added, as the market returns to vertical expansion. If one considers that the trade show for Central and Eastern European TV territories started with just one floor, its vertical and horizontal growths are astonishing. The current overflow of exhibitors was also evident at the hotel's basement level, where some companies exhibited with just a desk and an audiovisual set. Those desks took over the spot that formerly held the registration area, which had to be moved further back on the same floor.

DISCOP management was able to convince the hotel staff to make big improvements with the air conditioning system as well. This time participants could actually walk around fully dressed.

Another big improvement was DISCOP's handling of the "no-shows." This year, exhibitors reported an incredibly low number of buyers who



Televisa's Mario Castro, Claudia Silva, José Luis Romero



DISCOP was attended by around 10 Italian companies. Here, some representatives of the eight companies that exhibited under the ICE-Italian Institute for Foreign Trade umbrella.

missed their appointments. Some who, for whatever reason could not make scheduled meetings at the last minute, even called to cancel. This, perhaps, to avoid being embarrassed by DISCOP hostesses walking the floors with blackboards naming buyers "missing in action."

While the structural improvements helped to make the event better organized, the success of the market is primarily due to the growth of the television industry in Eastern Europe: a region awash with cash, rushing to catch up after decades of stagnation.

As summarized by Roz Parker of National Geographic Television International, "Eastern Europe is a rapidly developing marketplace, with an increasing number of channels needing content. DISCOP is the best place to meet new buyers and establish precisely their needs."

Distraction's Barbara Vallant attributed the "liberalization of the media in many Eastern European countries and the increase of TV advertising" to the recent growth in the Eastern European television marketplace. But she feels much could still be done to try and attract more Russian buyers to the Budapest conference.

Similarly, Meggan Kimberley of Regent Entertainment said: "For so many years [the area] was oppressed, and now with the economies improving, and some of the countries joining the European Union, they have many more opportunities for growth."

But, there is an additional "plus" attached to DISCOP: The fact that some of the buyers in attendance do not go to other markets.

Stated Jo Lovell of Carsey-Werner: "I go to DISCOP to meet buyers I don't normally meet — those who can't afford to go to MIP or MIPCOM. It's also a great opportunity to meet with fellow distributors and swap information [about the Central and Eastern European territories]." Lovell mentioned that she had very few noshows this year. She added that NATPE's takeover of DISCOP does not seem to have changed the market that much. "It's never terribly busy," she said. "But it's busy enough."

DISCOP — together with the L.A. Screenings in May, NATPE in January and to a lesser extent, MIPCOM — is also important for Latin American distributors.

Michelle Wasserman, who handles scripted sales for Telefe International, explained: "Eastern Europe is significant to us, but there's a recent tendency toward local production that makes for a very competitive market. Now in addition to the other Latin telenoveleros, I am competing with companies from places like Croatia that



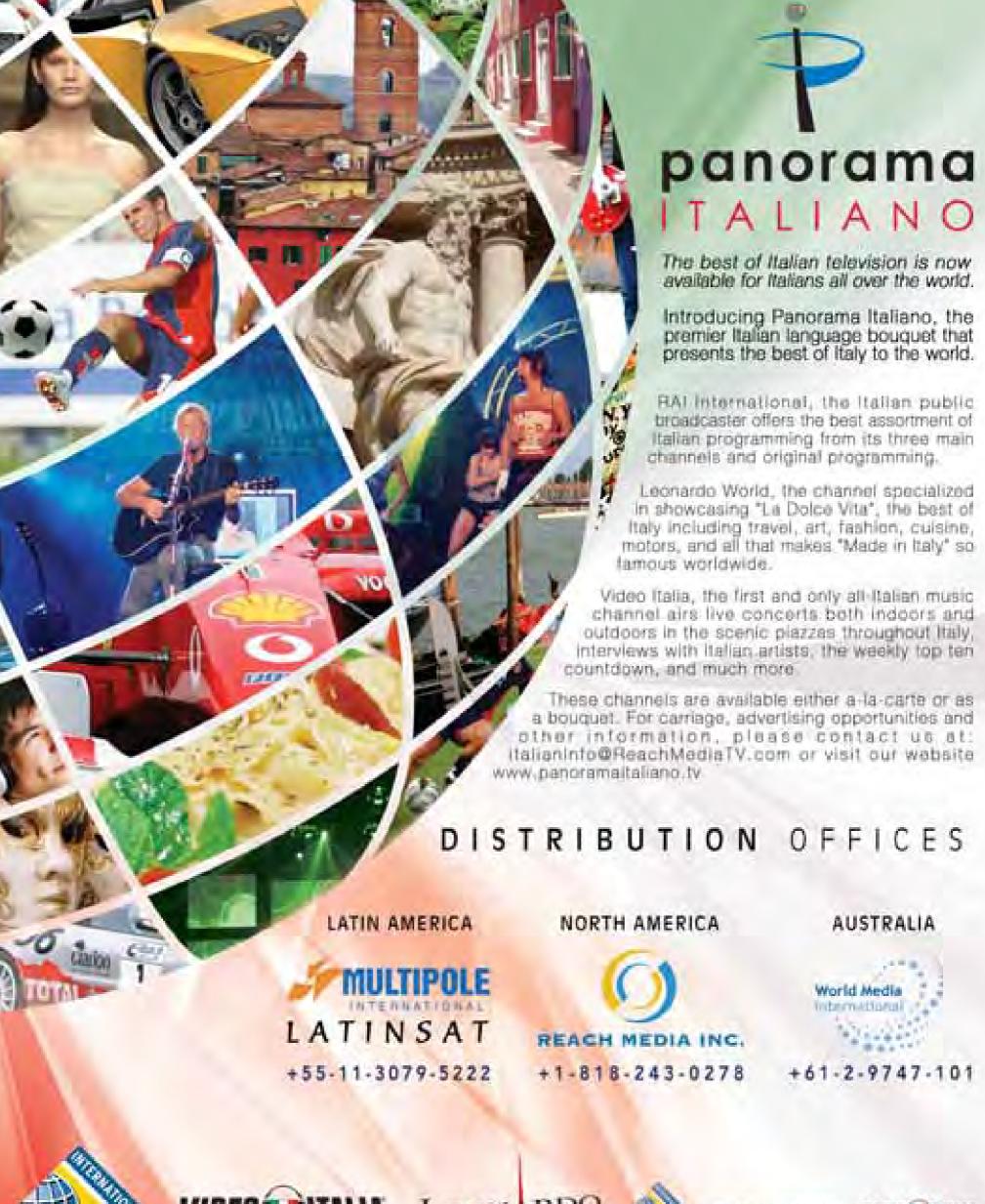
Bavaria Media's Oliver Kreuter, Stefanie Fritz and Helge Koehnen promote their "sweet" series

are producing their own novelas."

Wasserman further explained that in the year 2000 there was a boom in telenovela sales in Eastern Europe, but now a lot of her shows are being sold for non-primetime spots. What has made up for some of the loss incurred by local producers of telenovelas is the fact that new digital platforms are popping up around Western and Eastern Europe, creating more potential homes for product. In fact, during DISCOP, Wasserman completed deals with Poland's TVN and Polsat for their new digital platforms.

Wasserman noted more buyers than last year at this year's DISCOP, and observed that things are getting more organized each year. In terms of noshows, she said about 95 percent of scheduled meetings came to fruition. Now for the gripes: Wasserman noted that for such a long trip [from her home base in Argentina], it seems unfair that distributors are not able to take full use of the last third day of the market. She described DISCOP's final day as "disorganized," and said that some stands were being taken down while meetings were still being held. "We really need the market to be a full threeday event," she said.

Going back to the event's stats: There was an all-time high of 901 buyers from Central and Eastern Europe, representing 678 national, regional and thematic TV stations, DVD distributors, cable and satellite operators, format production companies and IPTV and mobile stations. Additionally, 530 television content sales execs, representing 383 TV content distribution companies from 41 countries were also on hand. In addition to the business that was done, DISCOP's newest program, DISCOPRO, a daylong conference and networking event dedicated to coproductions, drew 97 participants and 27 speakers at a number of panels and sessions. Its success ensures that the program will become a permanent market fixture.















### Eastern Europe Focus

### Russia Report

#### The Three Musketeers Of Russkoe Televidenie

n Russia, local production continues to account for 90 percent of primetime television. However, the opportunities for producers and distributors are still vast.

The largest local players are AMEDIA, Central Partnership and Star Media, the latter two of which rely more on original development, although AMEDIA is also moving in this direction. One of the main reasons Russian production companies have, for years, acquired formats from abroad was due to a lack of writers who could develop long-running dramas and sitcoms.

Recently Argentina's Telefe developed a telenovela with Channel Russia called *Tango de a tres (Tango by Three)* that takes place in both Russia and Argentina with characters from both continents.

AMEDIA adapted *The Nanny, Who's the Boss* and *Betty La Fea* for CTC in association with Sony Pictures Television International. AMEDIA also has two long-running dramas on First Channel: *L is for Love*, a Russian adaptation of *Myak Milocz*, a popular Polish series that airs on TVP 2, set to run for over 400 episodes — making it the longest-running series to date in Russia — and *Tatiana's Day*, an adaptation of Colombia-based Caracol's *War of the Rose*, which is now running over 100 episodes on First Channel.

Central Partnership specializes in adaptations of classics like *Master and Margarita, Doctor Zhivago* and the upcoming *Brother's Karamazov*, in addition to its feature film activities, which includes *Wolfhound*, a movie that generated over \$20 million at the Russian box office and has spawned a spin-off miniseries.

Star Media is the fastest-growing production company in Russia. Turnover has increased from U.S.\$28 million to U.S.\$75 million in the past year alone. Star Media produces telenovela *Guardian* 



Group Zeta is Intra's most recent production, airing on Channel One

Angel for Channel Russia and *Blood Brothers*, which ran on primetime on First Channel. Star is currently co-producing a crime series with CME and developing a World War II story in Poland. It is the first Russian production company to actively and successfully produce TV movies, and they are set to develop 20 more TV movies for the main networks.

Sony's involvement in the Russian market has continued as well. The studio acquired local production outfit LEAN, which rose to prominence with *Soldaty* on Ren TV and *Kadetsvo* on CTC. They are now producing a telenovela called *Mothers and Daughters* for CTC. This adapted novela is achieving the station average share for the channel. But the original success rate of series such as *Betty La Fea* have not be maintained and there have been casualties — Russian adaptations of *The Roldans* and *Pedro the Great* among them. Nevertheless, sitcoms and telenovelas are still fruitful opportunities for distributors in Russia. The fact that they are stripped daily means the demand is constant.

AMEDIA most recently adapted Warner Bros' *Suddenly Susan* for CTC following local versions of *Perfect Strangers* for Ren TV and *Grace Under Fire* for CTC. LEAN has successfully adapted Sony's *Married with Children* for TNT, where it achieves a 12 percent share, which is significantly higher than the station average. A local version of *Disney's Home Improvement* was also produced for CTC. AMEDIA's next projects are Sony's *I Dream of Jeannie* for TNT and *Warner's Full House* for CTC. TNT in particular is increasingly receptive to foreign formats, and Cinemotion Group recently licensed *Mile High* to produce a local adaptation of the series that airs on Sky in the U.K.

There are increased opportunities to license formats for vertical one-hour dramas in Russia. NBC Universal licensed the format of both *Law & Order: Criminal Intent* and *Law & Order: Special Victims Unit* to television production company 2V for broadcast on NTV. Both series have now been renewed for a further 24 episodes each and they have achived a 25-30 percent share in the male demographic. First Channel has also commissioned Telefe's vertical drama *The Pretenders* to be produced by AMEDIA.

A new area of opportunity in Russia for producers and distributors involves feature film production. Twentieth Century Fox has already acquired U.S. and international distribution to the *Night Watch, Day Watch* and *Dusk Watch* trilogy directed by Timur Bekmambetov, who is now helming his first Englishlanguage film for Universal Pictures, *Wanted*, starring Angelina Jolie, James McAvoy and Morgan Freeman. AMEDIA is also making its first foray into feature films with a full-length 3D animated film called *Krakatuk*. Universal has acquired distribution rights in Russia and the CIS, and international rights are also being discussed. Filmmaker Alexander Rodnyansky and CTC are in pre-production on the \$30 million Russian sci-fi bestseller *Forbidden Island* with supposed interest from Hollywood studios. **TH** 

### CHAMPAGNE AND CAVIAR FOR NOUVEAU RICHE MARKET

Leonard Yanovsky first became involved with the Russian TV industry in 1992, after recognizing the opportunities opening up in his home country. Yanovsky was familiar with the TV business, having already started his own U.S.-based cable TV engineering company, Yanovsky Associates. At first, he provided purely religious programming from American Christian Television to Russia for free. Then in 1997, he, along with partners, started another company: Costa Mesa, California-based Intra Communications. In the beginning, Intra distributed telenovelas and dubbed programming. But starting in 2002, the company began producing its own shows. Its first miniseries, *Time to Love*, was sold to Channel One in Russia. Now it supplies miniseries, series, films and dubbing services to Russia and the Commonwealth of Independent States (CIS).

VideoAge sat down with this expert on the Russian TV industry to see what's in store for that region.

VAI: How has the Russian TV business changed since your company started in 1997?

LY: It has become the fourth largest TV market in Europe in terms of advertising revenue after England, France and Germany. Now — as in other territories all over the world — there is growth in cable TV channels, and an appearance of IPTV platforms. But the purchasing budget is still small, so the majority of distributors still want to get onto the free-to-air networks. The CIS countries with the largest TV markets aside from Russia are Ukraine, Kazakhstan and Belarus, and all of those countries have appetites for Russian programs.

VAI: What opportunities are available to foreign distributors in Russia?

LY: Like any country, it's just too expensive for Russia to generate all of its own programming. So there is a need for quality foreign programming, specifically cartoons (since Russia doesn't produce many of its own), documentaries and movies

VAI: Are foreign programs ever shown in primetime on free-to-air channels?

When Channel One started broadcasting *Lost*, they did it in primetime. It showed that a quality foreign series can succeed in primetime if it is dubbed.

VAI: Are most shows dubbed or subtitled?

LY: All foreign-language shows are dubbed, either through the cheaper and more popular route of voice-overs or [the more expensive] lip-synching.

VAI: Is Russian programming still censored?

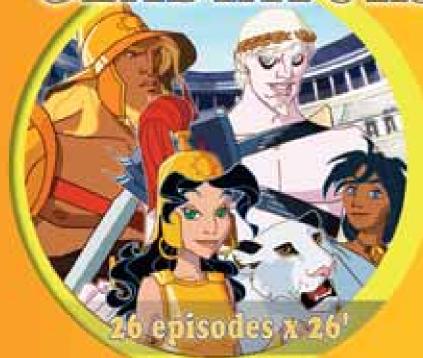
LY: No. The TV channels — and no-longer the government — control their own programming. Perhaps, there may still be censorship in news, but not in fiction. Today, one doesn't have to send programs to the Kremlin for approval. Channels work under government guidelines that limit advertising during kids' programming, nudity and bad language. But Russia's restrictions are almost the same as Europe's, and are looser than in the U.S. [*The Sopranos*, for example, which was relegated to a pay-TV channel in the U.S, was shown late at night on a free-to-air channel in Russia].

(Continued on Page 62)



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### Eastern Europe Focus

### Serbia Report

### **TV Must Grow To Become Viable**

By Rastislav Durman

erbia has been making slow progress in the E.U. statehood process, and this slowness is mirrored in the television industry, particularly with regard to broadcasting law. The Serbian Broadcasting Act was adopted in 2002, but full implementation has yet to happen.

Last year, following the lodging of many complaints (some disputes have not yet been settled), six nationwide broadcasting licenses were finally granted, in addition to six TV frequencies for metropolitan Belgrade (the capital city with a population of 2.5 million). This past summer, more than 20 regional licenses were also granted, which would indicate some progress if it weren't for the 148 awards still pending, and more than double that number of applications submitted.

The latest efforts to apply order to the Serbian TV sector come in the form of the General Binding Rules recently published by the Republic Broadcasting Agency (RBA) on the behavior of broadcasters in relation to their programming content.

From now on all programming that includes violence and "harder" erotic scenes can be



broadcast only in late evening hours. For now, the RBA Council --whose members are, according to motivated law. "knowledge conscientiousness" represent an independent body and take every opportunity to emphasize their independence.

However, one cannot help but notice how some

decisions made by the Council bear close relation to the wishes of certain politicians members of the former and current governments.

In the past year, three of Serbia's broadcasting organizations -- public broadcaster RTS, privately-owned TV PINK and TV B92 — managed to establish themselves as market leaders. Only seven years ago, there was a tremendous difference in their programming concepts — RTS was under the direct sponsorship of late dictator Slobodan Milosevic's family, and was the main support of their propaganda machinery. TV Pink had the approval of the former regime since it did not engage in politics and broadcast frivolous entertainment content. TV B92 represented an urban guerrilla directly confronting the regime. Today, they have begun to closely resemble one another by airing similar genres and formats.

RTS and TV PINK vie for the highest-rated channel position on an almost daily basis, with a total audience share of 40-50 percent. TV B92 takes third place, with an audience share of eight-to-10 percent.



The ratings of other broadcasters are so low they are symbolic some of them even on the level of statistical error. At the moment, it

seems that TV FOX is the up-and-coming only commercial TV channel with the potential to join the three leading broadcasters, providing that it successfully gets through its growing pains. Serbians have a good appetite for cable television content, and broadcasters from Croatia and Hungary have found loyal audiences in Belgrade, particularly in the province of Vojvodina.



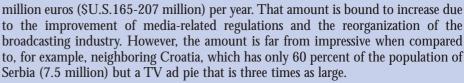
The FOX studio in Serbia

Aside from news, the TV

genre that attracts the most viewers is formats, such as Who Wants To Be A Millionaire and Big Brother, followed by countless variations of reality shows. Series in Serbian (or Croatian or Bosnian) are usually hits with audiences, whether they are produced in Serbia or in the other former Yugoslav Republics. Current production cannot meet the market requirements, so TV series from the 1970s and 1980s are repeated, and despite the fact that these series are, in some cases, being repeated for the 100th time, their ratings are still considerably high.

In Serbia, production is hindered by high costs and the unwillingness on the part of broadcasters to take risks and experiment with new ideas. Regardless, there is some production going on, albeit at a lower level than reached in the former Yugoslavia.

There is no hard data regarding how much revenue is generated by broadcasting, but it's been estimated that it reaches somewhere between 120 and 150



The revenue generated by the Serbian TV industry is certainly not sufficient to support its 200 TV stations. Plus, the transition from analog to digital broadcasting and IPTV is not far away, which will add more challenges to the current ones. When technology forces its changes, the industry will face a game with a new set of rules, without ever having dealt with the old ones.

International, a company involved in media publishing, media consulting and radio and TV Production. He is editor-in-chief of LINK (a magazine for media professionals, which has a presence in countries of former Yugoslavia) and executive editor of DISCOP LINK.

Rastislav Durman is a writer, TV director, producer and founder of Media Art Service

### Champagne & Caviar

(Continued from Page 60)

VAI: Are formats popular?

LY: Formats are much more popular than finished programs in Russia. Some of the smaller CIS Republics still prefer finished programs. In Russia, distributors must do more than just sell finished product. They need to establish themselves, build relationships with reliable production companies and channels, and be creative. It takes time. For example, Sony Pictures Television International bought production companies in Russia so that it could co-produce local versions of its own formats. NBC Universal was very successful with its Law & Order format (which airs on NTV) despite the fact that the original English version was never picked up at all. Other companies that have become involved with Russian formats are Endemol and Telefe.

VAI: What are some advantages to producing in Russia?

LY: Co-productions between CIS countries provide extra revenue that offsets production costs. As an example, Intra Communications is presently involved in the production of telenovelas that will simultaneously be aired in Russia and the Ukraine, and are available for additional Russian-speaking territories.

VAI: Are production costs increasing?

LY: Yes. Production studios are developing more programming, budgets are increasing and quality is improving. Foreign programming is a much less expensive option. But in Russia, local productions bring higher ratings.

VAI: What will the future of Russian TV look like?

(Continued on Page 64)

# Good stories have no frontiers

Formats

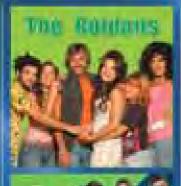




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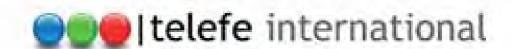
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### Eastern Europe Focus

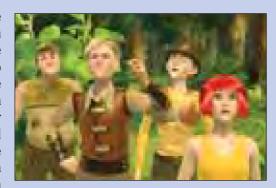
### Poland Report

### **Pioneering Format Trend Bodes Well**

BY TIM HORAN

Tim Horan is ITI Group's executive vice president in Poland. He previously spent three years at Russia's leading production company, AMEDIA. Here, he discusses the differences (and similarities) between the two Eastern European markets.

oland and Russia continue to be dynamic production environments. There are similarities between the two markets and some of the same formats have succeeded in both countries. But one of the major differences is that vertical programming is a feature of the Polish market, while Russia remains predominantly tied to a horizontal programming model.



Poland's major commercial network, TVN, successfully runs local versions of sitcoms The Nanny, entitled Nania, and Grace Under Fire, entitled Hela w Opalach. Local production company ATM Grupa is also producing Sony's Who's the Boss for Polsat. While Poland has followed in Russia's footsteps with some sitcom adaptations, the Polish stations are more selective.

Poland was primarily responsible for the trend of developing daily soaps principally from Fremantle on TVN and Polsat — before Russia ventured in that direction. TVN's Na Wspollnej, based on the Fremantle format Between Friends, runs daily from Monday to Thursday, and has been very successful.

Poland is a fruitful market for distributors of entertainment formats. Both Who Wants to be a Millionaire and Big Brother were popular on TVN. Big Brother has made a return to TV 4 this past autumn. Fremantle's Pop Idol was very successful on Polsat and BBC's Dancing with the Stars had a phenomenal 30 percent share on TVN. Similarly, in Russia there are two successful variations of *Stars on Ice* on First Channel and Channel Russia.

In their different and complementary ways, Poland and Russia offer unique opportunities for producers and distributors alike to license their formats, develop original co-productions and collaborate with the creative talent that is emerging in these nascent markets.

#### Champagne & Caviar

It will continue to grow. Free-to-air channels will lose viewers as a result of cable. The next step will be IPTV and video-on-demand services. But now the two biggest obstacles when it comes to development of IPTV platforms are piracy issues and the high costs of setting up the platform. Competition is already very high. When I was in Russia this past summer I noticed that many new scripted series and TV movies were airing during what used to be a slow season. If that's the case in the summer, just imagine how the other seasons are going to be. Business will continue to grow. As a result, there will be more mergers and acquisitions between media companies, production companies, distribution companies and channels.

VAI: Finally, can you tell us a little bit about Intra Communications?

LY: We were one of the first U.S. companies to begin distribution and production in Russia. We buy shows from countries all over the world and from studios (including the majors) and distribute them to Russia and CIS countries. We also produce miniseries, TV movies and telenovelas in Russia in Russianlanguage, and perform voice-overs and dubbing of foreign programs.

VAI: Why did you start this business?

LY: We saw a demand for quality programming in Russia. We started in the 1990s with telenovelas because almost every TV channel across the CIS countries had a telenovela slot. It was a cheap way to fill up daytime hours. For us, it was easier to guarantee payment with telenovelas. If you sell a TV movie and your client never pays, there's nothing you can do, but with a 150-episode telenovela, you can supply the first 20 episodes, and if you don't get paid, stop supplying them.



Leonard Yanovsky is president and CEO of Intra Communications

#### TV PULS GETS NEW LICENSE

n January 2007, the Polish National Broadcasting Council, the country's TV regulatory agency, approved Telewizja Puls' application to trade in its specialty niche-programming license (for religious and family programming) for a universal license, allowing it to build a stronger presence in the Polish market.

TV Puls is being rebranded this fall as a contemporary channel that is up to the pace of modern-day Poland and the European Union. It is creating an independent news department with leading journalists, famous on-air anchors and popular reporters for strong and aggressive newscasts. TV Puls News will station news teams throughout the country, so that stories can be reported when and where they happen.

On the entertainment programming side, the schedule will be a combination of locally produced content, acquired programs and

international formats adapted to Polish tastes.

International formats include Are you Smarter than a 5th Grader?, The Newlywed Game, The Package, Poland's

Worst Driver and The Biggest Loser. The channel will also broadcast Just for Laughs and Criminal Minds.

TV Puls, which is owned by U.S.-based News Corporation and the local Order of the Franciscan Brotherhood, has so far invested millions of dollars in new state-of-the art HD facilities with two major studios, relocated in the historic Chelsmka Studio Lot in Warsaw.

To run the operation, the owners called in industry veteran Farrell E. Maisel, who recently moved from Palm Springs, CA to Warsaw. Prior to joining Puls, Maisel worked for U.S. Government-funded Alhurra Television, the 24/7 pan-regional, satellite-delivered news and information-based network, which broadcasts to Arabic-speaking countries. Before that, he was group COO of Media Corp. in Singapore. From 1997-2001 he served as president and principal in the FMI Media Group, where he represented clients in Turkey, Scandinavia, Russia, Benelux and Central Europe in start-ups, reengineering and operations. Back in 1992, he was also based in Eastern Europe, launching Russia's first private, commercial TV station for Turner Broadcasting System, TV6.



Farrell E. Meisel, president of the Management Board at TV Puls



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### My Two Cents

ust as late U.S. president Richard Nixon used to preface his introductions, I too want to "make it perfectly clear" that television is not a tool for altruistic purposes. Television follows the money — it always has — and therefore it will follow through with the "green" trend where "green is now code word for environmentally friendly programming —" only if it will

Plus, the Financial Times has asked: "When was the last time you saw a business presentation you enjoyed? [...] Never?" (FT August 14, 2007).

Then looking at this year's MIPCOM conference line-up, among the most useless panels are those concerning mobile video (an old hat) and those about "green TV" (a new hat).

At MIP-TV last April we ignored one seminar that, according to the guide's description, looked at "what the broadcast industry is doing to help raise awareness about environmental issues and particularly about global warming." Reportedly, programming experts talked about what it really means to commission or distribute "green" programming and used examples from different genres such as documentaries, kids programming and reality television.

Now, a few months later, at MIPCOM, we must again ignore similarly useless seminars, this time falling under the banner of the grandiosely labeled "Green Day." Talk about the TV industry having a guilty conscience....

In the old ages, one could easily judge a city's level of corruption, sin and decadence simply by counting its number of churches. Today, guilty money goes to universities, hospitals and libraries. Poor people, on the other hand, cleanse their guilt by becoming religious fundamentalists, ready to shoot anyone who dares disagree with them.

It now seems that television too has a guilty conscience. But don't be fooled; it's just a show. Yet, if this "green" stuff could turn into a bona fide show business, then the TV interest would be real.

Don't get me wrong. Broadcast television is not evil, and those who taught otherwise have been proven wrong by the rise of the video game industry (with games such as "Doom").

In October 2002 — when we naively took this "green TV" stuff seriously — VideoAge was one of the first international TV trade journals to publish a feature on the activities of the Los Angeles-based Environmental Media Association (www.ema-online.org). That report, widely distributed at MIPCOM, was titled: "Entertainment and the Environment: How EMA Sounds its Warning"  $(http://www.videoageinternational.com/articles/2002/10/article4.html)\ and\ reported\ comments\ from\ then-EMA\ executive\ director$ (and now president) Debbie Levin.

Well, that was one of the most ignored stories ever published in VideoAge's 26-year history. Even the EMA shunned it. It seemed the association was upset that TV networks around the world would take notice, when, in reality and to EMA's relief, they totally disregarded it. By the way, one of the

EMA's founders was producer Norman Lear. Indicative is the fact that at the most recent MIP-TV, during the first of the market organizers' useless "green TV" seminars, neither EMA's Levin nor any other EMA officials were anywhere to be found (although an environmental agency from

the U.K. government was present).

Now, five MIPCOMs away from VideoAge's first environmental awareness attempt, this type of disregard has been institutionalized. Nonetheless, "green TV" is a great topic for seminars and websites; it brings in money to event organizers, cleanses some guilt and brings nice people together. But don't expect real interest from television. For now it's all just talk. Indeed, one of our contributors declined to write a story about environmental TV issues because of a lack of tangible information. And, when the environment issue is appropriated by the entertainment industry, it only elicits laughter, as in The Simpsons Movie.

In VideoAge's October 2002 story it was reported that "[TV] spots with Gwyneth Paltrow

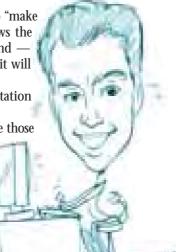
and Cameron Diaz are already airing [as public service announcements] throughout the United States. 'By using hot, young Hollywood as role models, young people will think it's cool and trendy to be good to the environment,' said Levin. 'It's all about role modeling.

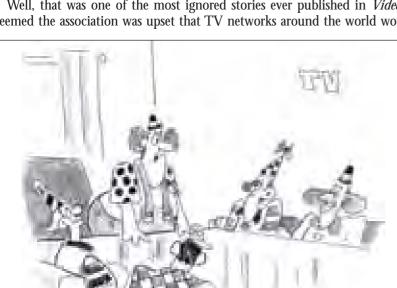
However, looking at television's history in the public interest arena — illegal drugs, drunk driving, health crises, George W. Bush's election, the Iraq War, cigarette smoking, firearms' accessibility to children — one cannot help but wonder.

All are important subjects for which television failed miserably. New York City mayor Michael Bloomberg singlehandedly did more to bring oxygen back into public places worldwide (by banning cigarette smoking in New York) than all the TV networks in the world combined. So, what would make someone think that this time television will be able to have a say on global warming, pollution, conservation or the environment in general?

Dom Serafini







"Enough with this Green TV stuff. It's time to get to some serious business!"

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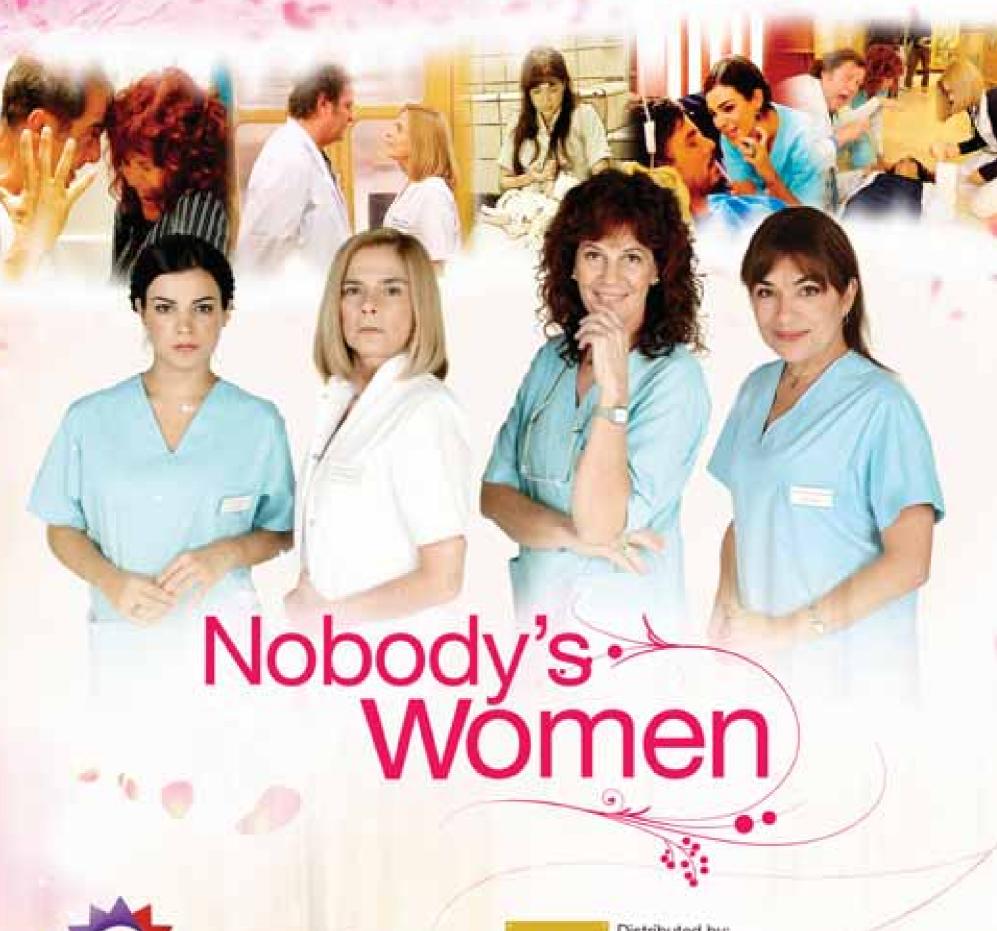
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